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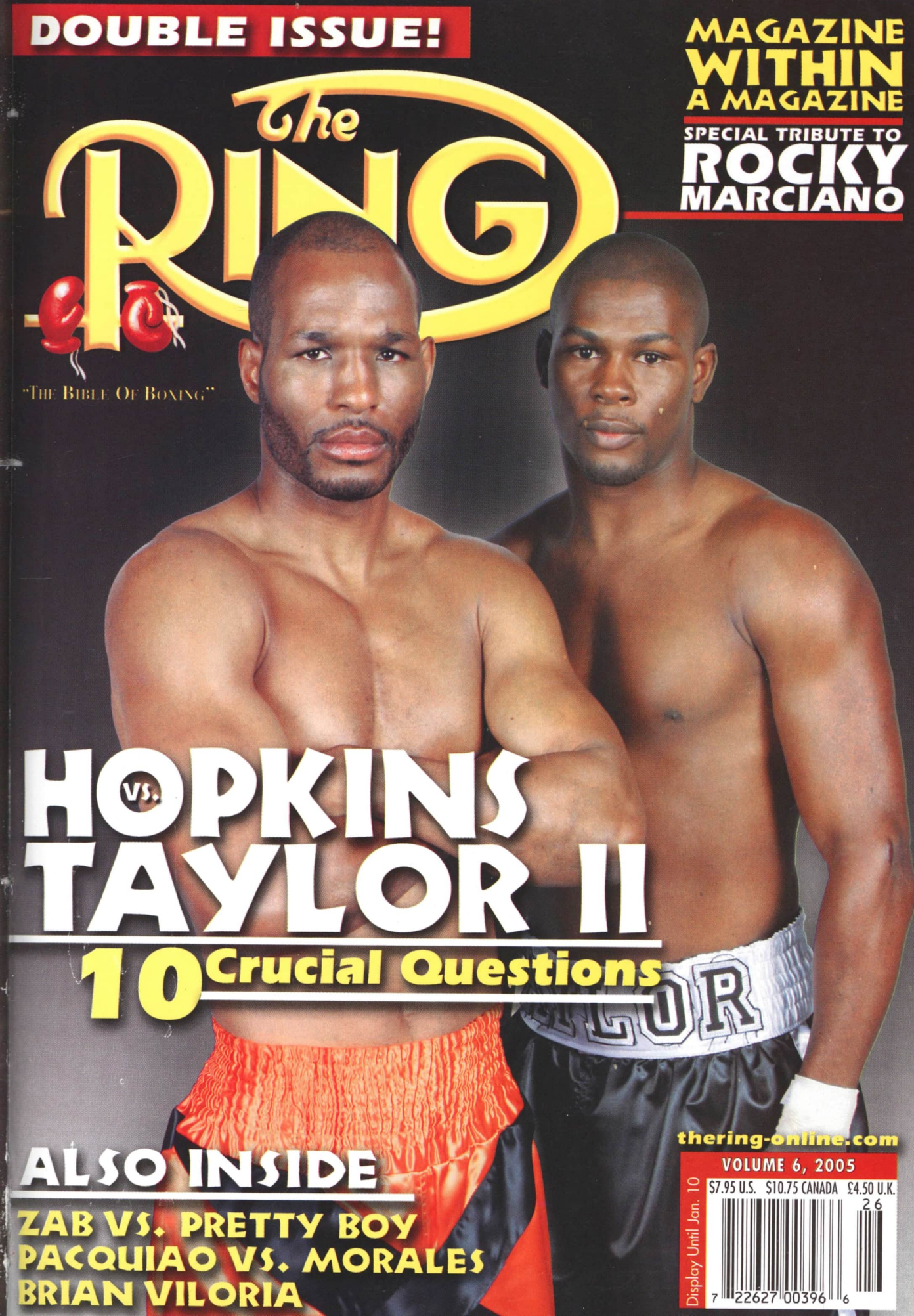

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10 Crucial Questions

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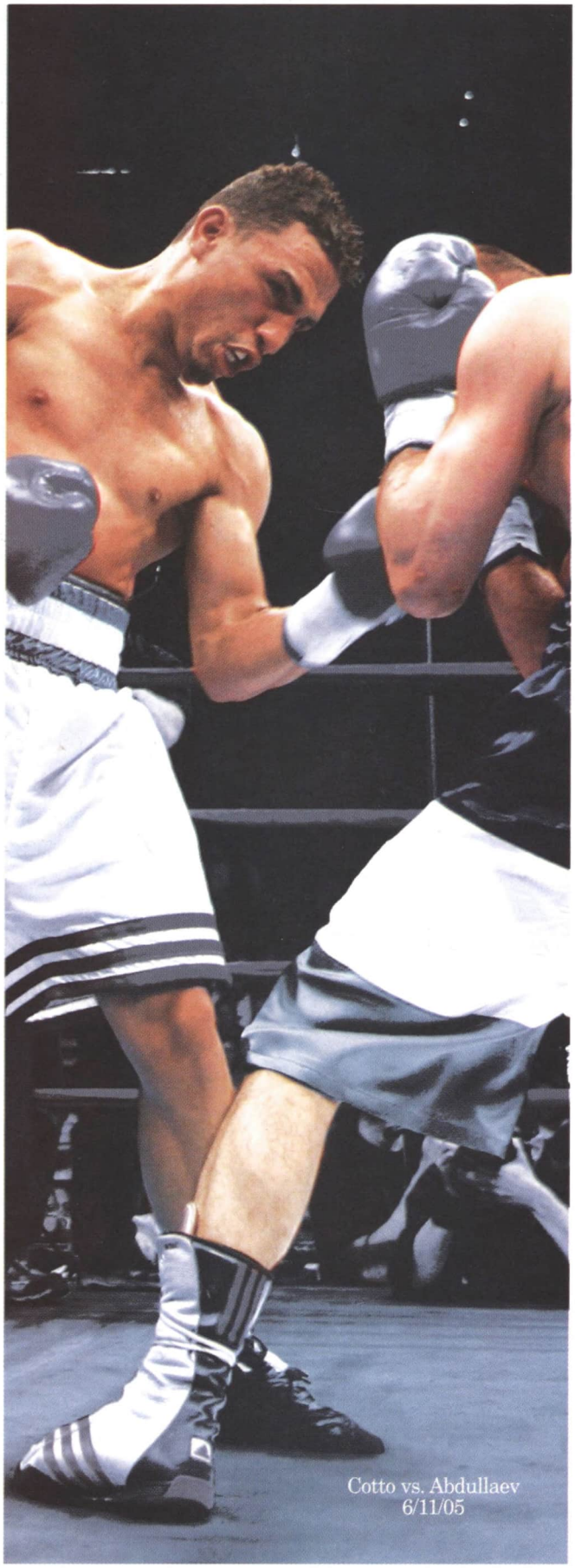

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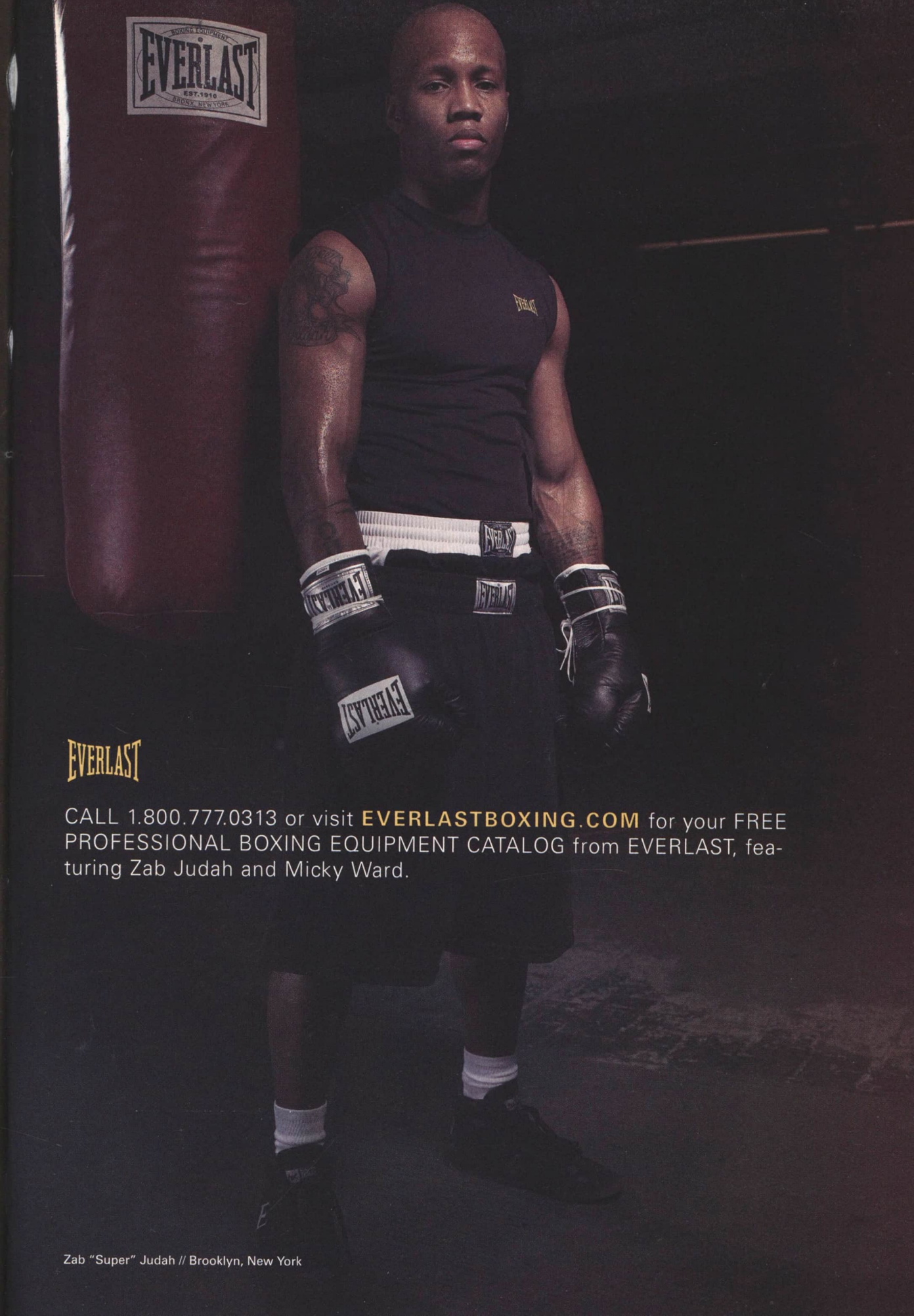
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The Ring

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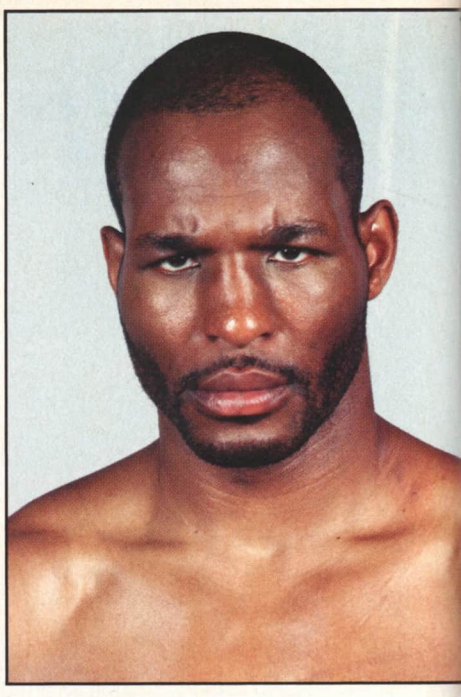

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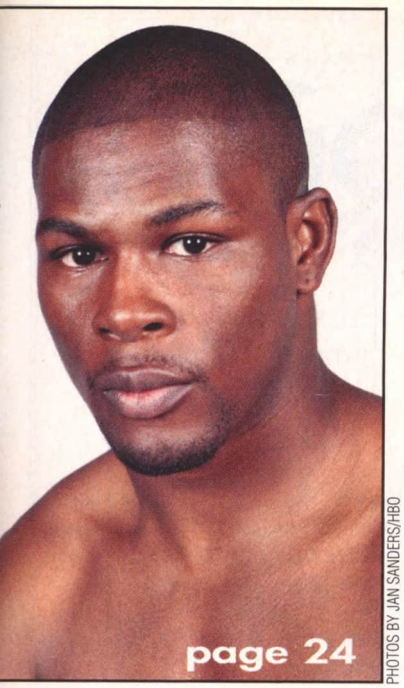
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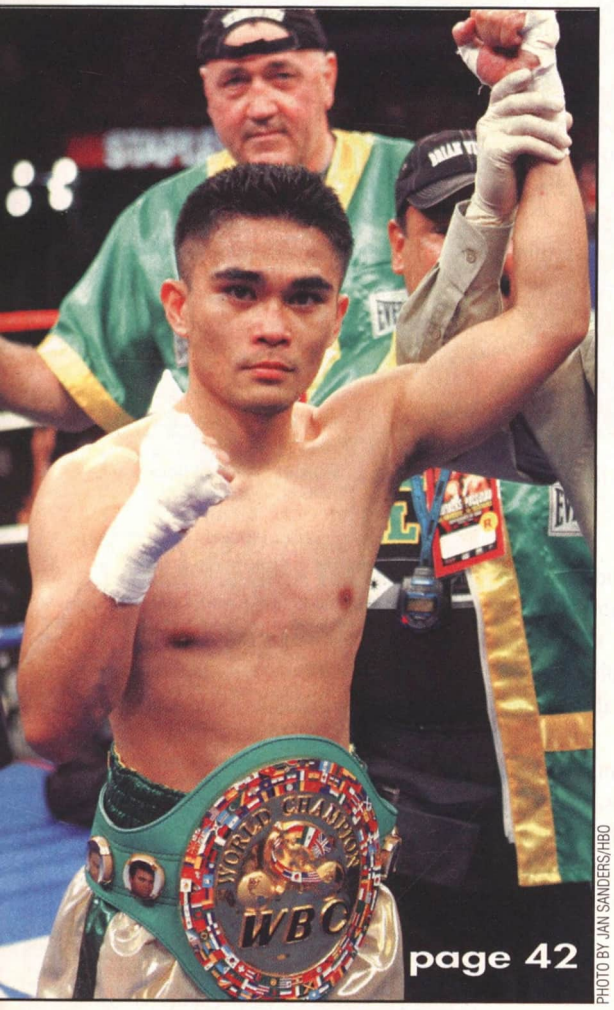

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RINGSIDE

There are certain RING-related topics that crop up on a regular basis that need to be addressed again for those who missed earlier explanations. The area that seems to cause the most confusion is THE RING's pound-for-pound ratings, and we have a situation in this issue that is virtually guaranteed to generate misunderstanding unless the reader grasps a few basic concepts.

One major mistake frequently made is comparing the pound-for-pound rankings with the divisional ratings. They are entirely different in both intent and the way the editors go about compiling them. The divisional ratings are a far more serious undertaking and are based almost entirely on what takes place inside a boxing ring. The pound-for-pound ratings depend much more on subjective thinking and are, therefore, frequently based on what goes on in the arena of the imagination.

Due to this fundamental difference, a fighter's pound-for-pound rating does not always align with his divisional standing. Take, for instance, the situation in which Erik Morales currently finds himself. Due to his upset defeat to Zahir Raheem and the fact that he has lost two of his last three fights, Morales dropped from fourth to sixth in the P-4-P ratings. Meanwhile, he retained his number-two ranking in the divisional ratings. The thinking is that while Morales' position in comparison with *all* boxers has slipped slightly, his status among the junior lightweights remains the same because the Raheem bout was fought at lightweight. Moreover, the fact that Morales stated that he would drop back down to 130 for his rematch with Manny Pacquiao emphasized that he should still be ranked among the junior lightweights.

Apparently, some readers put far too much emphasis on P-4-P ratings. They should be taken in the spirit in which they are intended—a fun way to separate the absolute best fighters in the world from the rest of the pack. It is the division ratings that define where a fighter is compared to the other competitors in his weight class and also determines who is eligible to fight for a vacant title.

While it's easy to understand why some are a bit baffled by the difference between the P-4-P and divisional ratings, two of the most frequent responses to our recent "Readers Survey" question "What would you like to add to THE RING?" have me puzzled.

The two things most often requested were "Where Are They Now?" and a schedule of upcoming fights. At the risk of sounding sarcastic, what do these readers think "THE RING Update" and "Looking Ahead" are about?

"THE RING Update" is exactly that, a way to let readers know what certain fighters have been doing since they retired. Same formula as "Where Are They Now?" but with a different name.

Due to the lead time involved in publishing a monthly magazine and the often last-minute nature of matchmaking, it is impossible to run a comprehensive scheduled of upcoming bouts. This is especially true of mid-range and minor fights, and any attempt to list them would be inaccurate and/or incomplete. Major matches, on the other hand, are usually made in time for us to preview them either in features or in "Looking Ahead."

Hopefully, I've cleared up some misunderstanding, and in closing I'd like thank all who took the time to complete the survey and return it to us. It is only through communication that we can serve you better, and even though we probably won't run another survey in the near future, please do not hesitate to continue to ask questions and comment via comeoutwriting@yahoo.com or by mailing us at P.O. Box 1148, Fort Washington, PA 19034.

Nigel Collins
Editor-in-Chief

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SUBSCRIPTION INQUIRIES
London Publishing Co.
P.O. Box 2085
Marion, OH 43306-8185
(815) 734-1212

The Ring (ISSN: 0035-5410), Vol. 6, 2005, is published monthly, with additional issues in August and December, by London Publishing Co., 6198 Butler Pike, Blue Bell, PA 19422. Periodicals postage paid at Blue Bell, PA 19422, and additional post offices. Postmaster: Send change of address notices to: The Ring, P.O. Box 2029, Dept. 9, Marion, OH 43306-8121. Single copy price $7.95 ($10.75 in Canada, £4.50 in U.K.). Subscription price $85.50 in the U.S., $114.90 in Canada and remaining countries. Not responsible for the loss or non-return of unsolicited articles or photographs, which will not be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed envelope bearing the proper amount of postage.

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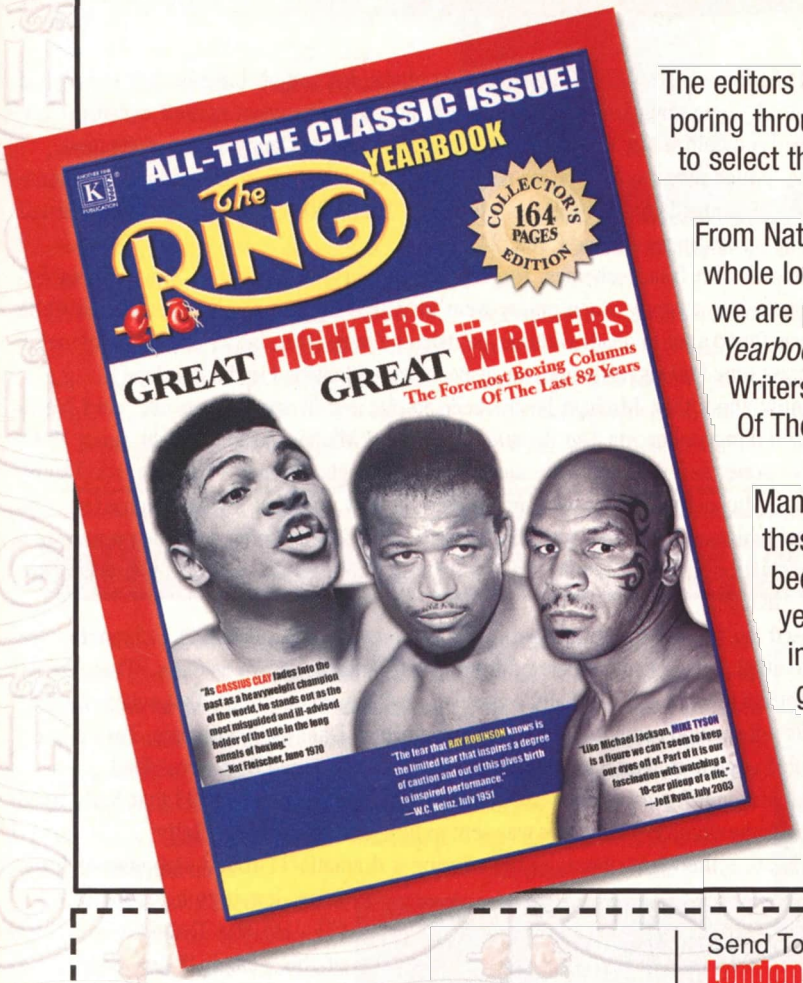

The editors of *The Ring* and *KO* spent months poring through every issue in our vast archives to select the all-time classic boxing columns.

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ROUND ONE

DANNY CARBAJAL JAILED IN FRAUD CASE

Michael Carbajal, the former IBF/WBC junior flyweight titleholder, and his older brother Danny had always been inseparable. These days, Michael may want a little space between himself and his oldest brother—who managed and trained Michael throughout his career—due to Danny's current situation.

Phoenix, Arizona, police arrested Danny on August 24, accusing him of hatching an elaborate scheme to defraud his estranged wife of joint assets worth $750,000. Carabajal, 54, was arrested along with his daughters Josephine, 35, and Celia, 24.

The trio was charged with fraud schemes, forgery, and perjury, according to *The Arizona Republic*. They were taken into custody when police were investigating the unsolved murder of Celia Carbajal, 50, who was found shot to death with her boyfriend, Gerry Best, in her apartment complex in February. As of press time for this magazine, no suspects were identified in the murders.

"From what I know about this, Michael hasn't been implicated in anything at all," said Norm Frauenheim, veteran boxing writer for *The Arizona Republic*. "Michael hasn't fought since 1999, and the brothers have gone their separate ways since Michael fought. In fact, I haven't seen Danny at a fight in five years. Michael is dealing with amateurs right now, and that's what Michael says he wants to do. Obviously, his name pops up with this because of his involvement with his brother. In a way, it's guilt by association; Danny Carbajal's arrest wouldn't have made headlines if it wasn't for his association with Michael."

Authorities released the following information to *The Arizona Republic*, detailing a chronology of events dating back to 2002, when Danny separated from Celia Carbajal, known as Sally. When Danny filed for and was granted a divorce in 2003, Sally was never made aware of it until 2004, when she filed for divorce. Once this information came to light, a judge overturned Danny's '03 divorce. The couple's new case was scheduled to go to trial on February 28, three days after she and Best were killed.

According to *The Arizona Republic*, police believed Danny told the court in '03 that Sally lived at his address and so all the divorce paperwork was sent to him, and hidden from Sally.

Michael Carbajal, 38, retired from boxing after scoring a dramatic 11-round stoppage of Jorge Arce, leavings a record of 49-4 (33). He was THE RING's Fighter of the Year in 1993. Since he's been retired for more than five years, Carbajal is a viable candidate for induction into the International Boxing Hall of Fame in Canastota, New York, in 2006. The pint-sized powerhouse brought attention to the junior flyweight division to American boxing fans, through some clever marketing by Bob Arum's Top Rank, which played off Carbajal's 1988 Olympic success in Seoul, South Korea, where he won a silver medal.

—Joe Santoliquito

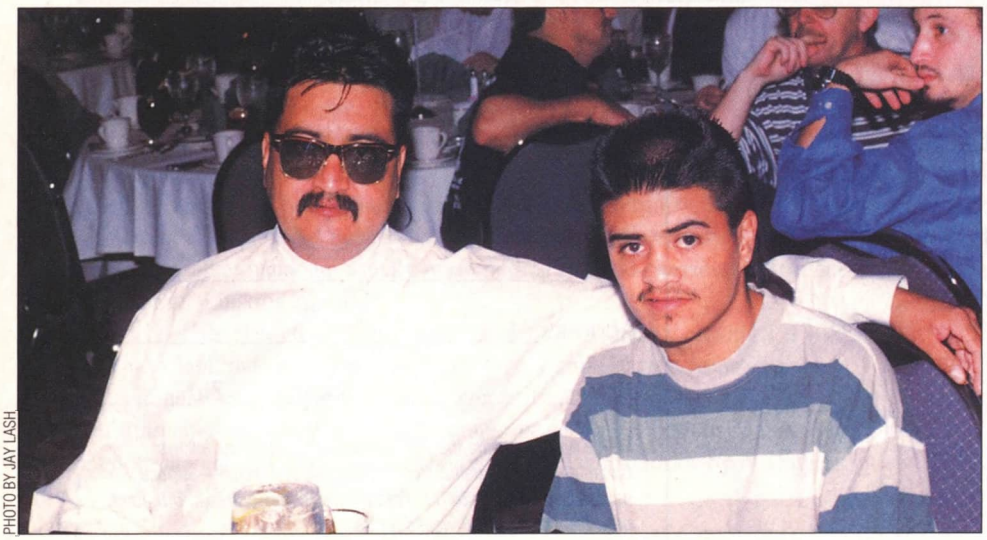


PHOTO BY JAY LASH

Danny and Michael Carbajal in 1995

WIGGED OUT!

As a promoter, Don King is boxing's best pitchman. In August, he made a pitch of a different kind.

King was the guest of honor at "Only In America Night," and threw out the first pitch prior to a Double-A game between the Norwich Navigators and New Hampshire Fisher Cats at Dodd Stadium, in Norwich, Connecticut. The first 1,000 fans to walk through the turnstiles were given Don King wigs.

Borrowing a page from King's promotional repertoire, the idea was that of rival boxing promoter Lou DiBella, the Navigators owner.

King and King for a day, DiBella

"I'm a minor league baseball owner who has a team with attendance problems," said DiBella. "And Don King is an international celebrity. He is the P.T. Barnum of his generation. You can wear that wig almost anywhere in the world and people will identify it with King. I'm very thankful that he did me this favor."

King spent most of the evening at the ballpark, signing autographs and posing for pictures with numerous fans, whether they were wearing the wig or not. DiBella, who promotes undisputed middleweight champion Jermain Taylor, has often done business with the shock-haired, controversial promoter.

"We may do things differently," said DiBella. "But we've done quite a bit of business together. It's always been good business."

And for DiBella, so is baseball. "Compared to boxing, where it's very cut-throat, minor league baseball is refreshing. The players are young and they are hungry. The atmosphere at the ballpark is great. It's family entertainment."

—Robert Cassidy

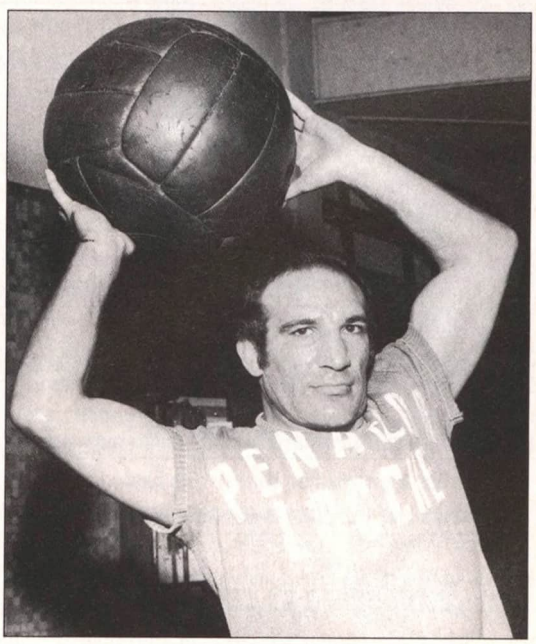
NICOLINO LOCCHE, 1939-2005

While it took Argentina's Nicolino Locche many years to become a world champion, he was a world-class character from the start. He was just nine years old when he first walked into the Mocoroa Boxing Gym and announced, "I want to be a boxer." Little Locche was smoking a cigarette at the time.

Locche, who died on September 7 at age 66, went on to become perhaps the most popular fighter in Argentine boxing history. During his reign as world junior welterweight champion (1968-'72), the puckish Locche's popularity surpassed even that of countryman Carlos Monzon. Locche's fights—part fiesta, part athletic contest—routinely sold out Buenos Aires' 20,000-seat Luna Park. A popular tango of the time included a line that roughly translates into, "Tonight it is not necessary to walk around the city, because tonight Locche is fighting in Luna Park."

Unlike Monzon, he was not a big puncher. Instead, Locche was a defensive genius who more than lived up to his nickname, "The Untouchable." He usually fought with his body and head pointed toward the canvas, peeking up at his opponents from below. Standing with toe-to-toe, Locche would make his foes miss, and as the punches whizzed harmlessly past him, the fans would yell "ole," just the way they do when a bullfighter avoids the horns. Locche was so cocky in the ring he would often talk to the radio announcers during a round.

After turning pro in 1958, Locche fought 136 times before hanging up his gloves in 1976 with a remarkable record of 117-4-14 (14) with 1 no-contest. Locche won the 140-pound title December '68, stopping Paul Fujii in Tokyo, Japan, and made five successful defensive before losing the belt to Alfonzo "Peppermint" Frazer in March 1972. He was elected to the International Boxing Hall of Fame in 2003.



Locche in his prime

—Nigel Collins

TV FIGHTS OF THE MONTH

DATE	WINNER/LOSER	NETWORK	DIVISION	SIGNIFICANCE	MATCHUP	RESULT
8/26/05	Allan Green W 10 Ted Muller	ESNP2	sm	C	D-	D+
Hey Allan, if you win every second of every round, how about trying to stop a guy?						
8/26/05	Oscar Diaz W 10 Thomas Davis	ESPN2	l	C+	B-	B-
Who else thinks the worse thing that could happen to Diaz is a title shot?						
8/26/05	Juan Arango KO 7 Andre Eason	PPV	jw	C+	B	C+
Good win for Arango, who can punch; we'll find out soon what else he can do						
8/26/05	Jameel McCline KO 3 Steve Pannell	PPV	h	C+	D	C
You've got to hand it to McCline; he won't take "You're just not that good" for an answer; good for him						
8/26/05	O'Neill Bell KO 11 Sebastian Rothmann	PPV	c	B-	C+	B+
Bell isn't the best cruiserweight in the world, but he's the most fun to watch; you can't go to sleep on the guy						
8/26/05	Shannon Briggs KO 7 Ray Mercer	PPV	h	C	D+	D
This was the same Mercer you had to hit with a delivery truck to hurt? It really is a drag getting old						
8/26/05	Nestor Rocha KO 4 Jose Barnica	Telefutura	b	C+	A	D+
When did it become the standard that when a fighter gets his nose busted, the fight is over? What is this, ballet?						
8/26/05	Fernando Trejo KO 10 Jose Cruz	Telefutura	l	B	B+	B-
Upset! Those early rounds in the bank don't mean squat if you can't make it to the end						
9/1/05	Jonathan Oquendo W 6 Elvi Martinez	HBO-L	jf	C-	C-	C
"El Burrito"? What, "El Chimichanga" was taken?						
9/1/05	Jhonny Gonzalez KO 3 William Gonzalez	HBO-L	b	B-	B	A
It's hard to say how good Gonzalez will turn out to be, but if all of his fights are as exciting as this one was, who cares?						
9/2/05	Terry Smith W 10 Julius Long	ESPN2	h	C-	B	B-
Watching giant guys like Long get pummeled never gets old; good, hard heavyweight scrap, though						
9/3/05	Ray Austin W 12 Owen Beck	Showtime	h	C	B+	C+
The depressing part is that between the two of them, Beck and Austin found 46 guys who were worse than they are						
9/3/05	Guillermo Jones KO 5 Wayne Braithwaite	Showtime	c	B-	B-	B
Don't cry for Braithwaite; it could have been have stopped in the first						
9/9/05	Eleazar Contreras KO 1 Alfonso Sanchez	Telefutura	w	C	C+	C
Yes, the same Alfonso Sanchez; with the same chin						
9/9/05	Steven Luevano W 12 Ruben Estanislao	Telefutura	jf	C+	B-	B-
Note to Luevano: have a donut and go back up to featherweight where you belong						
9/10/05	Manny Pacquaio KO 7 Hector Velazquez	HBO	l	A-	C+	B-
After all this time with Freddie Roach, how come Pacquiao still can't keep his hands up? Or stay on balance?						
9/10/05	Zahir Raheem W 12 Erik Morales	HBO	l	A	B-	C+
Never mind the weight issue, what we want to know is who's buttering the soles of Raheem's shoes before he fights						
9/16/05	Raul Martinez KO 1 Miguel Martinez	Telefutura	b	C	D+	D-
If you saw a punch land, let us know; we're still waiting						
9/16/05	Sandro Marcos KO 2 Johnny Tapia	Telefutura	f	C+	C+	B-
What's the over/under on how long it takes Tapia to implode in retirement?						

Category Explanation: "Significance"—The importance of the bout to the division and the fighters' futures; "Matchup"—The quality of the fighters and the prefight determination of how their styles will mesh; "Result"—How the bout turned out, from the viewer's perspective.

(RING championship fights in **bold** type)

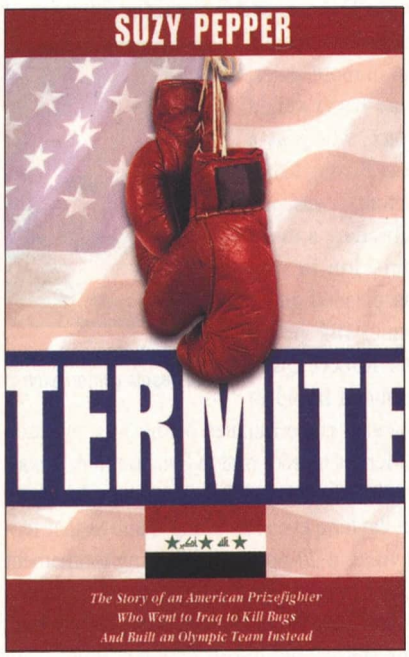
Division key: h—heavyweight; c—cruiserweight; lh—light heavyweight; sm—super middleweight; m—middleweight; jm—junior middleweight; w—welterweight; jw—junior welterweight; l—lightweight; jl—junior lightweight; f—featherweight; jf—junior featherweight; b—bantamweight; jb—junior bantamweight; fl—flyweight; jfl—junior flyweight; s—strawweight

Network key: PPV—Pay-Per-View; Show—Showtime; FOXSN—Fox Sports Net; Uni—Univision; Telef—Telefutura; Telem—Telemundo; HBO L—HBO Latino

BOXING BOOKSHELF

Written by Suzy Pepper, *Termite* (Morris Publishing, $14.95, 187 pages, paperback) chronicles the life of former Houston prizefighter Maurice "Termite" Watkins from his childhood to becoming an almost-accidental and most unlikely American hero in war-torn Iraq.

The first quarter of the book waxes nostalgic about an era during which regular boxing programming on national TV helped contenders like Watkins became matinee idols and even household names. Watkins lost a 15-round decision to Saoul Mamby in 1980 in a bid for the WBC junior welterweight belt.



Upon retiring in 1990, Watkins, 61-5-2 (42), became a Chevy salesman, and although he dabbled in coaching, it wasn't until 2004 when he stumbled into a second high-profile career in the Sweet Science. He was contracted to exterminate bugs from military installations in Iraq, but ended up coaching the Iraqi Olympic boxing team.

Pepper engagingly weaves a tale of a man so single-minded and fixated on his mission amidst the turmoil, perils, and politics of war that he comes across as part James Bond, part Forrest Gump as he approaches, and usually solves, each problem with a mixture of shrewd bravado and innocent naiveté.

Boxing aside, *Termite* also provides a first-hand view of the controversial war from a non-combatant's perspective. Watkins remains largely apolitical as he relates his escapades, from risking life and limb to set up training camp in a war zone to dealing with the controversial IABA to coping with the cold-blooded assassination of a dear friend.

Termite ends on a triumphant note with Watkins guiding Iraq's only Olympian, light flyweight Najah Ali, to a first-round victory in Athens with all of Iraq and much of the world rooting for him. Although it was self-published, *Termite* has reached the shelves of commercial bookstores and the rights were recently acquired by movie producer Fred Kuehnert.

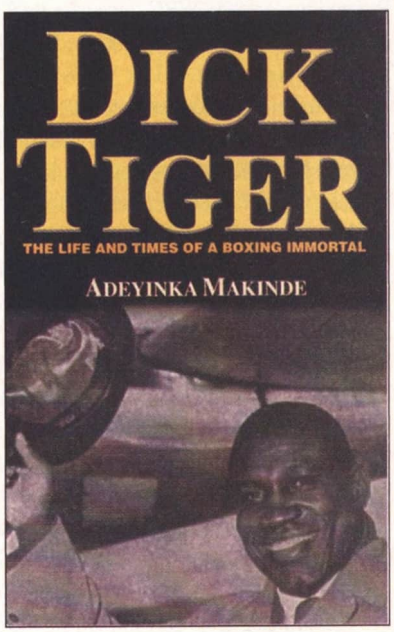
—Peter Lim

Boxing historians generally agree that Dick Tiger earned the right to be regarded as Africa's preeminent pugilist. During an 18-year career, Tiger thrice won undisputed world championships in two of the sport's traditional weight classes—middleweight (1963 and '66) and light heavyweight ('68). He was also THE RING's Fighter of the Year in 1962 and '65, and is enshrined in the International Boxing Hall of Fame.

Even so, the wide recognition accorded Tiger by the international boxing community has always been obscured by the lack of same in his Nigerian homeland, where Tiger's controversial partisan role during the country's civil war (1966-'70) ultimately led to his alienation from the country's history books, where he rightly belongs. In this light, *Dick Tiger: The Life And Times Of A Boxing Immortal* by Adeyinka Makinde (World Association Publishers, $14.95, paperback) is a much-welcome addition to the sparse biographical literature about this intriguing fighter.

The author is to be commended for his exhaustive research, which has enabled him to present a more comprehensive account of the life and times of Tiger than had ever been written hitherto. The 312-page biography is replete with fascinating facts and details of Tiger's life and delves into several issues that had been buried with him since his death in 1971.

Of particular historical significance is the author's attempt to revise the generally accepted version of Tiger's fight record by amending the dates of many of Tiger's initial pro bouts in Nigeria in the early-1950s. Moreover, Makinde has added a number of hitherto unknown opponents that Tiger purportedly fought in the country in 1959 (Jimmy Asani and Joe Quadri), and reversed the result of one generally accepted victory to a loss (Tommy West, 1954), thereby refuting the generally accepted notion that Tiger once held the Nigerian middleweight title.



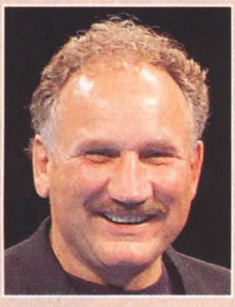
There is, however, a glaring discrepancy in the summation of the fight log presented in the book. Despite the author's quantitative revisions of Tiger's fights that culminate in a total tally of 85, the summary still reflects the generally accepted total figure of 81 fights. Notwithstanding this discrepancy, Makinde's new biography will certainly make fascinating reading for Tiger enthusiasts and avid boxing fans alike. It should also contribute immensely to efforts geared toward the rehabilitation of the subject's image and legacy in his home country.

—Damola Ifaturoti

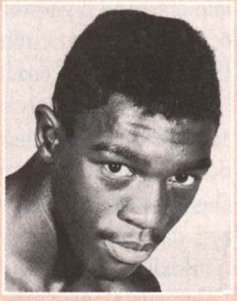
OUTSIDE THE ROPES

The WBC has made the organization's former bantamweight titleholder and current Las Vegas RING correspondent, **Wayne McCullough**, an ambassador. "For the first time in my life, I was knocked off my feet, when I received the news from the WBC," said McCullough. "It is a privilege and an honor to be recognized by the WBC as the world ambassador for peace and goodwill in the sport" ... According to Associated Press, eight Tibetan monks have created a sacred artwork of colored sand, called a mandala, to commemorate the friendship of **Muhammad Ali** and the **Dalai Lama**. Traditionally, the artworks are destroyed upon completion to symbolize the impermanence of beautiful things, a central tenet of Buddhist philosophy. But this mandala was secured with spray-on glue and will be dedicated at grand opening of the Muhammad Ali Center, in Louisville, Kentucky, on November 19. "It reflects the gift that Muhammad speaks of often—that we all have within us to be able to give something to another in order for that person to meet his or her potential," said Mike Fox, president of the Ali Center ... The International Professional Ring Officials, Guilty Promotions, and the WBC donated a total of $9,437 to the widow of boxer **Martin Sanchez**, who died in July after suffering a head injury during a bout in Las Vegas. In a related event, The *Las Vegas Review-Journal* reported that during a review of Sanchez' death by chief deputy attorney general **Keith Kizer**, **Dr. Flip Homansky** of the Nevada State Athletic Commission said he was aware of "mills" in Mexico where fighters are able to buy an MRI result without taking the scan. "I feel that data from Mexico is very difficult to substantiate," said Homansky. "There were four Martin Sanchezes fighting out of the same province. They don't have a (national boxer ID) like we have in America" Homnasky did not, however, identify the location of the so-called MRI mills ... The **American Association of Boxing Commissions** passed a resolution that called for member commissions to cease regulating boxing in non-commission states and on tribal land without boxing commissions. Federal law states that boxing may take place in non-commission jurisdictions if the promoter brings in officials from commissioned states, which is what has happened for a number of years. But based on the fact that the AABC has no liability insurance in these locations, the organization acted to stop regulating bouts in no-commissioned states. Individual commissions may still regulate boxing in no-commission areas, but the AABC will have no affiliation with regulating those events. The states currently without commissions are Alabama, Alaska, Delaware, Minnesota, South Dakota, and Wyoming. The loss of AABC support has made it extremely difficult to stage boxing in those states, but in Minnesota, former heavyweight contender **Scott LeDoux**, who was a member of the Minnesota Boxing Commission for 18 years before it was shut down in 2001, is spearheading a move to form a new commission in that state... **Richard Merla** pleaded guilty to fatally stabbing former IBF junior bantamweight titleholder **Robert Quiroga** at the home of a mutual friend in August 2004. A plea bargain came minutes before jury selection was going to begin for Merla's murder trial in San Antonio, Texas. He received a 40-year prison sentence. This August an estimated 2,500 people attended a daylong event honoring Quiroga that featured, among other activities, a 20-bout youth boxing tournament and candlelight vigil. Quiroga's brother, Epi, has started a foundation in memory of the slain boxer that funds mentors, counseling, and sports programs for abused and at-risk children, along with college scholarships for low-income students ... Former lightweight contender **Len Matthews**, 66, died of pneumonia on August 29 at Thomas Jefferson Hospital in his hometown of Philadelphia. Matthews turned pro in 1957 and quickly rose in prominence due to his crowd-pleasing style. "Len was flashy and aggressive," Philadelphia promoter **J Russell Peltz** told the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. "He was a typical Philly fighter; he had fast hands and a lot of power. He was very popular and became a big drawing card in the late-1950s." Victories over **Henry "Toothpick" Brown**, **Buddy Rogers**, **Steve Ward**, **and Orlando Zulueta** led to a pivotal match with future Hall of Famer **Carlos Ortiz** in April '59, in which Matthews suffered a sixth-round TKO defeat. Matthews' ability to sell tickets was a double-edged sword, as he was matched early and often against the best available opponents, which eventually took a heavy toll. Although he didn't have his final bout until April 1964, Matthews' best days were over by '61. Other notable fighters he beat include, **Candy McFarland**, **Kenny Lane**, **Jimmy Soo**, **and Paul Amrstead.** After he quit the ring with an overall pro record was 42-10-3 (29), Matthews worked as a janitor for the Philadelphia School District until he retired with a physical disability in 1985.

Ali: Honored by Tibetan monks



LeDoux: Wants new Minnesota commission



Matthews: Philly favorite dead at 66

THE PUNCHLINES

"Let me pour a little water on your balls."

—Jose Morales, trying to pep up his son, Erik, between rounds of the Zahir Raheem fight

"I don't care if he gets in the ring on crutches. Whatever Roy Jones shows up, I plan on destroying him. I'm not complaining about my injuries. We're in the hurt business. So suck it up like a man and let's get ready to fight."

—Light heavyweight champion Antonio Tarver responding to rumors that Jones was injured and might pull out of their October 1 rubber match

"THE BIBLE OF BOXING"

RATINGS ANALYSIS

For weekly updated RING ratings, go to www.thering-online.com

POUND-FOR-POUND

1. **FLOYD MAYWEATHER**
   Junior Welterweight
2. **WINKY WRIGHT**
   Junior Middleweight
3. **MARCO ANTONIO BARRERA**
   Junior Lightweight
4. **MANNY PACQUIAO**
   Junior Lightweight
5. **JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ**
   Featherweight
6. **ERIK MORALES**
   Junior Lightweight
7. **RICKY HATTON**
   Junior Welterweight
8. **DIEGO CORRALES**
   Lightweight
9. **JERMAIN TAYLOR**
   Middleweight
10. **BERNARD HOPKINS**
    Middleweight

(For period ended September 14, 2005)

HEAVYWEIGHTS: No changes.

CRUISERWEIGHTS: There was some reshuffling here, as Guillermo Jones shot up from fifth to first, thanks to his fourth-round stoppage of previous number-one contender Wayne Braithwaite, who tumbles to five. Steve Cunningham also moved up from fourth to second, based on his 12-round decision over Kelvin Davis and his previous decision victory over Jones. Johnny Nelson slips from second to third to make room for Cunningham and Carl Thompson drops from third to fourth due to the changes atop the division.

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS: Clinton Woods (sixth last issue) and Julio Gonzalez (fourth last issue) switch positions, after Woods scored a decision victory over Gonzalez.

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS: No changes.

MIDDLEWEIGHTS: No changes.

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS: Travis Simms is close to be being dropped from the ratings due to inactivity. Simms last fought on October 2, 2004, scoring a decision victory over Bronco McKart.

WELTERWEIGHTS: No changes.

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS: No changes.

LIGHTWEIGHTS: Zahir Raheem enters at eight, due to his one-sided decision victory over Erik Morales. Raheem's inclusion drops Ricky Quiles from eight to nine. Isaac Hlatshwayo debuts at number 10, replacing Jose Santa Cruz, who exits after a 10-round stoppage loss to Fernando Trejo.

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS: Morales maintains his hold at number two as his lopsided loss to Raheem was at lightweight. Cassius Baloyi, previously ranked number nine, exits after his decision loss to Isaac Hlatshwayo, moving Robbie Peden up from 10 to nine. Alex Arthur enters at 10.

FEATHERWEIGHTS: Joan Guzman moves up from junior featherweight and debuts at nine, forcing down Spend Abazi from nine to 10. Nick Cook exits to make room for Guzman.

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS: Guzman (fourth last issue) departs to campaign at featherweight, while Celestino Caballero advances from sixth to fourth on the strength of his fifth-round stoppage of Jose Luis Valbuena. Poonsawat Kratingdaenggym enters at five, replacing Ricardo Cordoba, who drops from five to six after his split-decision loss to Kratingdaenggym. Nedal Hussein enters at 10, courtesy of a three-fight winning streak, replacing Shoji Kimura.

BANTAMWEIGHTS: No changes.

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS: No changes

FLYWEIGHTS: No changes.

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS: Pichitnoi Siriwat (fifth last issue) exits after suffering an eighth-round kayo to Junichi Ebiuoka. Nelson Dieppa moves up from six to five. Brian Viloria debuts at six, courtesy of a first-round knockout of Eric Ortiz, who exits the ratings after previously being rated seventh. Ulises Solis moves up from eight to seven, Jose Aguirre from nine to eight, and Kermin Guardia from 10 to nine. Junichiro Kaneda enters at 10.

STRAWWEIGHTS: No changes.

POUND-FOR-POUND: Having lost two of his last three fights, Erik Morales drops from fourth to sixth. His demotion pushes up Manny Pacquiao (fifth last issue) and Juan Manuel Marquez (sixth last issue) to fourth and fifth, respectively.

THE RING RATINGS

For Period Ended September 14, 2005

PHOTO BY JOHN GICHIGI/GETTY IMAGES

Joe Calzaghe remained number one at super middleweight with a victory over Ashira

How Our Ratings Are Compiled

Fighters recognized as champions by THE RING are rated at the top of their division, with the top 10 contenders listed below.

Championship vacancies can be filled by winning a box-off between THE RING'S number-one and number-two contenders, or, in certain instances, a box-off between our number-one and number-three contenders.

The only three occasions when a fighter will lose his championship status are when he retires, moves to another weight division, or is defeated in a championship bout.

Ratings By The Editors

HEAVYWEIGHTS
Weight Unlimited

Champ: VITALI KLITSCHKO
Ukraine 35-2 (34)

1. **CHRIS BYRD**
Flint, MI 38-2-1 (20)
2. **JOHN RUIZ**
Methuen, MA 41-5-1 (28)
3. **HASIM RAHMAN**
Baltimore, MD 41-5-1 (33)
4. **JAMES TONEY**
Ann Arbor, MI 68-4-2 (43)
5. **LAMON BREWSTER**
Los Angeles, CA 32-2 (28)
6. **MONTE BARRETT**
Queens, NY 31-4 (17)
7. **CALVIN BROCK**
Charlotte, NC 26-0 (21)
8. **SAMUEL PETER**
Las Vegas, NV 24-0 (21)
9. **WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO**
Ukraine 44-3 (40)
10. **JAMEEL McCLINE**
Clifton, NJ 32-5-3 (20)

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 154 pounds

Champ: WINKY WRIGHT
St. Petersburg, FL 49-3 (25)

1. **ROMAN KARMAZIN**
Russia 34-1-1 (21)
2. **KASSIM OUMA**
W. Palm Beach, FL 21-2-1 (13)
3. **DANIEL SANTOS**
Puerto Rico 29-2-1 (20)
4. **FERNANDO VARGAS**
Oxnard, CA 26-2 (22)
5. **IKE QUARTEY**
Ghana 36-2-1 (30)
6. **VERNO PHILLIPS**
Aurora, CO 38-10-1 (20)
7. **TRAVIS SIMMS**
Norwalk, CT 24-0 (18)
8. **JAVIER CASTILLEJO**
Spain 58-6 (39)
9. **RODNEY JONES**
Lafayette, LA 36-3 (22)
10. **ALEJANDRO GARCIA**
Mexico 25-1 (24)

FEATHERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 126 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ**
Mexico 44-2-1 (33)
2. **INJIN CHI**
South Korea 30-2-1 (18)
3. **HUMBERTO SOTO**
Mexico 37-5-2 (21)
4. **ROCKY JUAREZ**
Houston, TX 23-1 (16)
5. **SCOTT HARRISON**
Scotland 24-2-2 (14)
6. **VICTOR POLO**
Colombia 34-5-3 (24)
7. **MANUEL MEDINA**
Mexico 64-14 (29)
8. **CHRIS JOHN**
Indonesia 36-0-1 (20)
9. **JOAN GUZMAN**
Dominican Republic 24-0 (17)
10. **SPEND ABAZI**
Denmark 32-1 (10)

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 122 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **OSCAR LARIOS**
Mexico 56-3-1 (36)
2. **MAHYAR MONSHIPOUR**
France 28-2-2 (19)
3. **ISRAEL VAZQUEZ**
Mexico 38-3 (28)
4. **CELESTINO CABALLERO**
Panama 22-2 (16)
5. **POONSAWAT KRATINGAENGYM**
Thailand 23-0 (15)
6. **RICARDO CORDOBA**
Panama 25-1 (17)
7. **YODDAMRONG SITHYODTHONG**
Thailand 42-2-1 (18)
8. **SERGIO MANUEL MEDINA**
Argentina 22-0 (13)
9. **GABULA VABAZA**
South Africa 21-0-1 (5)
10. **NEDAL HUSSEIN**
Australia 39-2 (25)

BANTAMWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 118 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **RAFAEL MARQUEZ**
Mexico 34-3 (30)
2. **HOZUMI HASEGAWA**
Japan 18-2 (5)
3. **VEERAPOL SAHAPROM**
Thailand 49-2-2 (34)
4. **RATANACHAI VORAPIN**
Thailand 63-8 (42)
5. **SILENCE MABUZA**
South Africa 18-0 (15)
6. **GENARO GARCIA**
Mexico 34-4 (20)
7. **CRUZ CARVAJAL**
Mexico 25-13-1 (21)
8. **RICARDO VARGAS**
Mexico 38-11-3 (12)
9. **JHONNY GONZALEZ**
Mexico 30-4 (26)
10. **WLADIMIR SIDORENKO**
Ukraine 17-0 (6)

CRUISERWEIGHTS

Weight Limit: 200 pounds

Champ: JEAN-MARC MORMECK
France 31-2 (21)

1. **GUILLERMO JONES**
Panama 33-3-2 (26)
2. **STEVE CUNNINGHAM**
Philadelphia, PA 18-0 (9)
3. **JOHNNY NELSON**
England 44-12-2 (29)
4. **CARL THOMPSON**
England 33-6 (25)
5. **WAYNE BRAITHWAITE**
Guyana 21-2 (17)
6. **O'NEIL BELL**
Atlanta, GA 25-1-1 (23)
7. **DALE BROWN**
Canada 34-4-1 (22)
8. **PIETRO AURINO**
Italy 34-2 (16)
9. **ALEXANDER GUROV**
Ukrain 38-4-1 (33)
10. **KRZYSZTOF WLODARCZYK**
Poland 32-1 (25)

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS

Weight Limit: 175 pounds

Champ: ANTONIO TARVER
Orlando, FL 23-3 (18)

1. **GLEN JOHNSON**
Miami, FL 42-10-2 (28)
2. **ZSOLT ERDEI**
Hungary 22-0 (13)
3. **ROY JONES**
Pensacola, FL 49-3 (38)
4. **CLINTON WOODS**
England 38-3-1 (23)
5. **FABRICE TIOZZO**
France 47-2 (31)
6. **JULIO GONZALEZ**
Huntington Beach, CA 38-3 (23)
7. **TOMASZ ADAMEK**
Poland 29-0 (20)
8. **PAUL BRIGGS**
Australia 23-2 (17)
9. **THOMAS ULRICH**
Germany 28-1 (19)
10. **MONTELL GRIFFIN**
Chicago, IL 47-6 (30)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Weight Limit: 168 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **JOE CALZAGHE**
Wales 39-0 (31)
2. **MIKKEL KESSLER**
Denmark 36-0 (27)
3. **JEFF LACY**
St. Petersburg, FL 20-0 (16)
4. **MARKUS BEYER**
Germany 33-2 (12)
5. **ANTHONY MUNDINE**
Australia 24-3 (19)
6. **DANNY GREEN**
Australia 20-2 (19)
7. **MANNY SIACA**
Puerto Rico 19-5 (17)
8. **OTIS GRANT**
Canada 37-2-1 (17)
9. **ROBIN REID**
England 38-5-1 (27)
10. **LIBRADO ANDRADE**
Mexico 22-0 (16)

MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Weight Limit: 160 pounds

Champ: JERMAIN TAYLOR
Little Rock, AR 24-0 (17)

1. **BERNARD HOPKINS**
Philadelphia, PA 46-3-1 (32)
2. **WINKY WRIGHT**
St. Petersburg, FL 49-3 (25)
3. **FELIX STURM**
Germany 24-1 (11)
4. **ARTHUR ABRAHAM**
Germany 16-0 (14)
5. **HOWARD EASTMAN**
England 40-3 (35)
6. **KINGSLEY IKEKE**
Canada 23-1 (13)
7. **SAM SOLIMAN**
Australia 31-7 (12)
8. **CHAD DAWSON**
New Haven, CT 19-0 (13)
9. **SEBASTIAN SYLVESTER**
Germany 19-1 (8)
10. **SCOTT DANN**
England 22-2 (16)

WELTERWEIGHTS

Weight Limit: 147 pounds

Champ: ZAB JUDAH
Brooklyn, NY 34-2 (25)

1. **ANTONIO MARGARITO**
Mexico 32-4 (23)
2. **CORY SPINKS**
St. Louis, MO 34-3 (11)
3. **SHANE MOSLEY**
Pomona, CA 40-4 (35)
4. **LUIS COLLAZO**
Queens, NY 26-1 (12)
5. **THOMAS DAMGAARD**
Denmark 36-0 (27)
6. **KERMIT CINTRON**
Reading, PA 24-1 (22)
7. **JOSE ANTONIO RIVERA**
Worcester, MA 37-4-1(24)
8. **OKTAY URKAL**
Germany 36-3 (11)
9. **DAVID ESTRADA**
Chicago, IL 18-2 (9)
10. **SEBASTIAN LUJAN**
Argentina 23-2-1 (15)

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS

Weight Limit: 140 pounds

Champ: RICKY HATTON
England 39-0 (29)

1. **FLOYD MAYWEATHER**
Grand Rapids, MI 34-0 (23)
2. **MIGUEL COTTO**
Puerto Rico 24-0 (20)
3. **CARLOS MAUSSA**
Colombia 19-2 (16)
4. **KOSTYA TSZYU**
Australia 31-2 (25)
5. **JUNIOR WITTER**
England 32-1-2 (19)
6. **ARTURO GATTI**
Jersey City, NJ 39-7 (30)
7. **VIVIAN HARRIS**
Brooklyn, NY 25-2-1 (17)
8. **DeMARCUS CORLEY**
Washington, D.C. 30-4-1 (16)
9. **LOVEMORE NDOU**
Australia 40-8-1 (26)
10. **SOULEYMANE M'BAYE**
France 32-1 (17)

LIGHTWEIGHTS

Weight Limit: 135 pounds

Champ: DIEGO CORRALES
Las Vegas, NV 40-2 (33)

1. **JOSE LUIS CASTILLO**
Mexico 52-7-1 (46)
2. **JOEL CASAMAYOR**
Miami, FL 31-3-1 (19)
3. **JUAN LAZCANO**
El Paso, TX 34-3-1 (26)
4. **JUAN DIAZ**
Houston, TX 28-0 (14)
5. **JULIO DIAZ**
Coachella, CA 32-3 (24)
6. **ACELINO FREITAS**
Brazil 37-1 (32)
7. **ALMAZBEK RAIYMKULOV**
Kyrgyzstan 20-0-1 (12)
8. **ZAHIR RAHEEM**
Las Vegas, NV 27-1 (16)
9. **RICKY QUILES**
Puerto Rico 38-6-3 (8)
10. **ISAAC HLATSHWAYO**
South Africa 22-0 (9)

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS

Weight Limit: 130 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **MARCO ANTONIO BARRERA**
Mexico 60-4 (42)
2. **ERIK MORALES**
Mexico 48-3 (34)
3. **MANNY PACQUIAO**
Philippines 40-3-2 (31)
4. **JESUS CHAVEZ**
Mexico 41-3 (28)
5. **VICENTE MOSQUERA**
Panama 21-1-1 (10)
6. **YODSANAN NANTHACHAI**
Thailand 43-3-1 (25)
7. **JORGE BARRIOS**
Argentina 44-2-1 (32)
8. **CARLOS HERNANDEZ**
Bellflower, CA 41-5-1 (24)
9. **ROBBIE PEDEN**
Australia 25-2 (14)
10. **ALEX ARTHUR**
Scotland 21-1 (17)

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS

Weight Limit: 115 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **MARTIN CASTILLO**
Mexico 29-1 (16)
2. **MASAMORI TOKUYAMA**
North Korea 31-3-1 (8)
3. **LUIS PEREZ**
Nicaragua 23-1 (15)
4. **FERNANDO MONTIEL**
Mexico 31-1-1 (24)
5. **ALEXANDER MUNOZ**
Venezuela 28-1 (26)
6. **KATSUSHIGE KAWASHIMA**
Japan 28-4 (18)
7. **JOSE NAVARRO**
Los Angeles, CA 23-1 (10)
8. **HAWK MAKEPULA**
South Africa 26-3 (17)
9. **GERRY PENALOSA**
Philippines 48-5-2 (33)
10. **MARK JOHNSON**
Washington, D.C. 44-4 (28)

FLYWEIGHTS

Weight Limit: 112 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **PONGSAKLEK WONJONGKAM**
Thailand 56-2 (31)
2. **LORENZO PARRA**
Venezuela 25-0 (17)
3. **VIC DARCHINYAN**
Australia 24-0 (19)
4. **IRENE PACHECO**
Colombia 29-1 (22)
5. **JORGE ARCE**
Mexico 40-3-1 (30)
6. **OMAR NARVAEZ**
Argentina 19-0-2 (13)
7. **ROSENDO ALVAREZ**
Nicaragua 34-2-2 (22)
8. **BRAHIM ASLOUM**
France 19-0 (7)
9. **TAKEFUMI SAKATA**
Japan 23-2-1 (10)
10. **HUSSEIN HUSSEIN**
Australia 28-2 (21)

JR. FLYWEIGHTS

Weight Limit: 108 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **ROBERTO VASQUEZ**
Panama 20-1 (17)
2. **WILL GRIGSBY**
St. Paul, MN 18-2-1 (11)
3. **VICTOR BURGOS**
Mexico 37-14-3 (22)
4. **HUGO CAZARES**
Mexico 21-3-1 (15)
5. **NELSON DIEPPA**
Puerto Rico 22-2-2 (13)
6. **BRIAN VILORIA**
Waipahu, HI 18-0 (12)
7. **ULISES SOLIS**
Mexico 17-1 (13)
8. **JOSE AGUIRRE**
Mexico 33-4-1 (20)
9. **KERMIN GUARDIA**
Colombia 35-4 (21)
10. **JUNICHIRO KANEDA**
Japan 12-2 (8)

STRAWWEIGHTS

Weight Limit: 105 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **YUTAKA NIIDA**
Japan 18-1-3 (8)
2. **MUHAMMAD RACHMAN**
Indonesia 50-7-4 (22)
3. **IVAN CALDERON**
Puerto Rico 23-0 (5)
4. **EAGLE KYOWA**
Japan 14-1 (5)
5. **KATSUNARI TAKAYAMA**
Japan 15-2 (7)
6. **ISAAC BUSTOS**
Mexico 24-7-3 (13)
7. **JUAN LANDAETA**
Venezuela 18-3-1 (15)
8. **OMAR SOTO**
Mexico 14-2-1 (10)
9. **DANIEL REYES**
Colombia 34-3-1 (29)
10. **RODEL MAYOL**
Philippines 21-0 (16)

RYAN OUT LOUD

By Jeff Ryan

SHOWDOWN LOWDOWN

The idealist/Rodney King in me wonders why we can't all just get along. This promoter won't deal with that one, this guy's counter-suing that guy, the WBA beltholder can't unify against the WBC titlist because one is an HBO fighter and the other's a Showtime property (worse yet, the IBF king is under contract to The Cartoon Network and the WBO ruler has been tied up by The Food Channel). The result is too much speculating and not enough spectaculars, too many ifs and not enough accidental butts.

As this column has pointed out before, boxing has the keys to the palace in its hands, but time and time again it misplaces them. In other sports, certain appealing matchups often occur only if the planets are properly aligned.

If you desire a particular World Series showdown, a dream pairing in the finals of tennis' U.S. Open, or two bitter rivals going head-to-head during the last 18 holes at The Masters, you have to cross your fingers and say a prayer that things work out the way you hope. In boxing, though, *any* matchup is possible, at least theoretically. All it takes is a couple of phone calls and the right amount of money and—presto—instant dream fight. No three rounds of playoffs to get through first. No hoping So-and-So can make the cut.

PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS/HBO

After beating Morales, Raheem deserves Corrales-Castillo winner

So don't bother telling me all the reasons why the fights that would make *my* day are a headache to put together. Don't tell me how one or two of them couldn't sell out the lobby of a Taco Bell. Don't make wisecracks about how sleep disorder clinics have already bought the rebroadcast rights to one of the others. Keep your opinions to yourself. This is *my* list of bouts that ought to be made:

Winky Wright vs. the winner of Bernard Hopkins-Jermain Taylor II: Admittedly, the thought of this is a bit frightening. If "The Executioner" landed only 96 blows over 12 rounds of his July clash with Taylor, and Taylor connected

with just 86, there's a good chance that if either of them fought Wright, the fight game would be classified, at least for one night, as a non-contact sport. Heck, it could make World Cup soccer look like arena football by comparison.

But, hey, it doesn't matter. It's time boxing did right by Wright. The big man on the junior middleweight campus has been carrying a lunch pail for 15 years and serves as a prime example of how good things can happen for nice guys if they remain patient, work hard, and believe in themselves. Wright has paid so many dues that he ought to get a rebate. At age 34, and after wins over Shane Mosley and a humbling of Felix Trinidad, Wright deserves this opportunity, no matter how technical or defense-oriented (i.e. dull) his fight plan might prove to be.

Laila Ali vs. Ann Wolfe: Let me jump on myself and save the rest of you the trouble. Hey, Ryan, don't you hate women's boxing and question the reasons for its very existence? You hypocrite! How can you now turn around and put a women's bout on your list of fights you want to see?

Good point. Well, as Don King did in Tokyo after Buster Douglas starched Mike Tyson, let me try to weasel my way out of this on a technicality. You'll notice that your columnist wrote that these are the bouts that *should* be made, not necessarily the ones that will have me racing to ringside or frantically dialing the pay-per-view operator.

Watching Ali puree one tomato cannette after another is tiring. Wolfe is 22-1 with one no contest, and, most importantly, a super middleweight like "The Greatest's" daughter. Sure, Ali-Lucia Rijker is the dream fight of women's boxing. In reality, though, the size difference between the two divas makes it likely that it would be a replay of Ali's thrashing of Christy Martin. That's why you hear me crying Wolfe.

Zahir Raheem vs. the winner of Diego Corrales-Jose Luis Castillo II: Why Raheem and not, say, Juan Diaz? Because Raheem was so impressive in upsetting Erik Morales in September. Guys who pull off shockers intrigue me, especially when they display the poise and smarts Raheem did. He was quick, hard to hit, and determined to remain in control. And most impressive of all, he was never rattled when Morales tried to rally and the crowd attempted to pump the Mexican up.

Sure, the lightweight recycling program always has the Joel Casamayors and Juan Lazcanos ready to step in at a moment's notice. This time, though, let's give Raheem a chance to show if he's that good or Morales, at least at 135 pounds, was simply that bad.

Floyd Mayweather vs. Ricky Hatton: This one has just about everything going for it. It pits junior welterweight king Hatton against his top challenger and matches pound-for-pound leader Mayweather with his number-seven challenger. It's an undefeated boxer vs. an undefeated brawler, and you can be sure that Hatton will fight "Pretty Boy" the way Arturo Gatti should have, by trying to force the action, getting rough in the trenches, and firing punches from every angle imaginable.

Mayweather would no doubt be favored, so to even the playing field, let's stage it at the MEN Arena in Manchester, England, with 22,000 Hatton crazies attempting to raise the decibel level to something approaching a 747 on takeoff. And then let's pray that there's not a controversial decision.

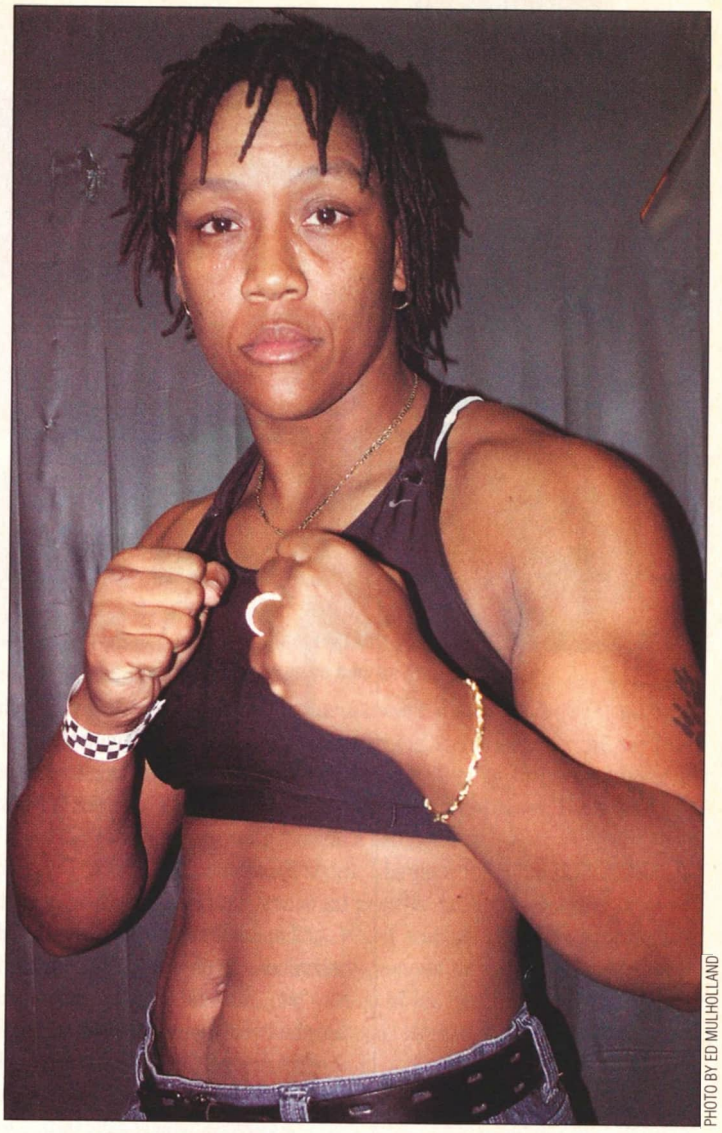


PHOTO BY ED MULHOLLAND

Ryan wants–but wouldn't necessarily watch–Wolfe vs. Ali

Zab Judah vs. the winner of Mayweather-Hatton: That Judah-Mayweather friendship would be an obstacle to contract negotiations only until a high enough percentage of the pay-per-view take was worked into the purses. As for Judah-Hatton, it would be no less interesting. Hatton stopped Kostya Tszyu, who kayoed Judah. Does that translate into a Hatton victory? Not necessarily. Styles make fights. Frazier beat Ali and Foreman crushed Frazier, but Foreman couldn't defeat Ali.

Vitali Klitschko vs. Chris Byrd II: True, you can make the case that putting the tedious Byrd on any list of must-make fights is grounds for putting the author of that list in a straitjacket. But hear me out. It's not just that Byrd owns a win over Klitschko in a bout the Ukrainian was winning before he shockingly quit with a bum shoulder. (Would the ending of that first meeting inspire Klitschko this time around, or play with his mind?)

Let's ignore the alphabet straps the two men wear and instead look at THE RING heavyweight ratings, where Klitschko is king and Byrd is his prime contender. Like it or not, this is a bout that has to be made to tie up loose ends. And speaking of loose ends, a few of the straps on this straitjacket could use tightening. ■

DIGGING DEEP

By Ivan Goldman

CRAZED ALPHABET GANG BURGLES OWN BELT

Too bad we couldn't hear the conversation between Don King and his long-time deputy commander, Jose Sulaiman, before Sulaiman, using a pretext as frail as Calista Flockhart in a wind tunnel, stripped Javier Castillejo of his WBC junior middleweight title. He then placed the confiscated bauble in the figurative path of King-promoted Ricardo Mayorga, who barely qualified as a junior middle and had been kayoed in his previous outing.

If we were to believe the WBC's press release, the King-Sulaiman discussion went something like this:

"You know, *Senor* Don, I care nothing for financial gain. In fact, I spit on it. But I feel in my heart of hearts that I must take this action for the good of the sport."

"I spit with you, *Don* Jose. But allow me to note that even the most illustrious of sanctioning organizations can present a bill for its services. After all, we are not communists."

"No indeed, *Don* Don. And it is my sacred duty to ascertain that no unsavory elements endanger our beloved sport. If the belt remains around the waist of the Spaniard, prizefighting can only come to grief. Except I forget—what did he do wrong?"

"The facts are complicated, *Don* Jose. Don't worry your pretty little head."

"As always, you see the truth, *Don* Don. After all, we are men of action."

"Nobody knows the trouble we've seen, *Don* Jose. We cannot allow critics to force us off the correct path, to interfere with our noble calling of safekeeping the integrity of boxing."

PHOTO BY ED MULHOLLAND

King, Mama Mayorga, and Ricardo show off the WBC junior middleweight belt

"Once again, *Don* Don, just hearing your kind assurances makes my heart glow with love and admiration for all mankind."

"Now, now, *Don* Jose, you embarrass me. I only make the same sacrifice that any other saintly scholar and sportsman would in my place. And you yourself, as all the world knows, are a tower of rectitude, a beacon to the oppressed."

"Oh, *Don* Don."

"Oh, *Don* Jose."

"We make quite a team, *Don* Don."

"Batman and Robin got nothin' on us, *Don* Jose."

It's a pity they released no tape to prove the sparkling cleanliness of their sudden moves. As Reagan used to say, trust, but verify.

Without that evidence, strong clues lead some of us to suspect a different scenario—that the WBC swooped down on hapless Javier like buzzards on an injured fawn. The belt they took back to their nest in Mexico City was only of the "interim" variety, but interim apparently means whatever alphabet bandits say it means. The thing was still worth dough to a promoter who knew how to exploit it, and it's now worn by King's Mayorga.

The really curious part of this bizarre larceny came later, when HBO's Larry Merchant and Jim Lampley bashed the WBC on camera a few minutes after Fernando Vargas decisioned beltless Castillejo in Rosemont, Illinois. Bristling with well-founded indignation, they explained in great detail just how tarnished alphabet titles have become, using the stripping of Castillejo as their prime example. But they never mentioned there was indeed a legitimate junior middleweight champion—Winky Wright. He won THE RING championship by defeating Shane Mosley in March 2004. No muss, no fuss, no twisted rulings designed to benefit accomplices or bandit buddies. Wright can lose his championship only one way—in the ring. He can also give it up by retiring or moving to another division. Although his last fight was at 160 pounds, he had yet to signal whether he would surrender his junior middle championship.

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Referee Tim Adams keeps close tabs on Soto-Juarez

RING belts involve no sanctioning fees or other financial shenanigans. They were first awarded in 1922 and were reconstituted by this magazine approximately three years ago to untangle the putrid mess the alphabet gangs created. If anyone knows a better way to sanitize the process, I'm listening. The benign truth of the 154-pound championship sat quietly next to the HBO team. But once again they chose, for whatever reason, not to acknowledge it.

MAGOO ONE: How wrong can a referee be in one round? In round five of the Jeff Lacy-Robin Reid fight, Jorge Alonso of Florida took a point from Reid for butting hometowner Lacy in their Tampa, Florida, super middleweight fight. As Alonso prepared to lecture Reid, Lacy knocked him to the canvas. Showing astounding lack of judgment, Alonso took the point *and* ruled it a knockdown. Then he didn't count all the way to eight. Plus, the headbutt he penalized Reid for followed a more severe headbutt delivered by Lacy. And finally, if Alonso, who took two points from out-of-towner Reid in the course of the fight, were to watch a tape, he would perhaps see what he apparently never noticed during the live action—Lacy's elbow making frequent contact with Reid's chin. Aggressive Lacy, though his style is not the smoothest, needed no help from Alonso anyway, making Reid quit on his stool after competing seven rounds against the tag team of Lacy and Alonso.

MAGOO TWO: To the IBF for stripping Juan Manuel Marquez of its featherweight belt because his estranged promoter, Bob Arum, refused to fund a ridiculous mandatory title defense against an obscure Thai boxer destroyed by Manny Pacquiao in one round. We've come to expect this sort of thing from alphabet gangs. But in this case, additional problems were involved. Tough, talented Marquez has been turning down big fights because he says the money isn't right. He feels he deserves the bigger purses offered to Pacquiao, Marco Antonio Barrera, and Erik Morales. But when's the last time you saw those three in a bad fight?

Presented with certain styles, Marquez, though a skilled counterpuncher, moves away to avoid possible headbutts or other inconveniences. No sustained attacks, lots of retreats. Too often he looks like a featherweight version of ultra-cautious Roy Jones. His caution in the ring is matched by the caution of his handlers, who once turned down a fight with Prince Naseem Hamed when Hamed was the hottest featherweight in the world.

What happened? While Marquez stayed home, Barrera exposed and vanquished Hamed in a fight most experts said he could not win. This brings to mind Marlon Brando's famed taxi-cab soliloquy in *On The Waterfront*: "So what happened? He gets the title shot outdoors in a ballpark, and what do I get? A one-way ticket to Palookaville."

Sometimes it seems Team Marquez prefers Palookaville.

CHICAGO GETS IT RIGHT: Let's hand it to those judges who gave the decision to the unheralded but deserving Humberto Soto over popular Rocky Juarez. We've seen so many ugly outcomes under similar circumstances in other locales that it felt like a fairy tale when everybody got it right. A terrific fight followed by a correct, unanimous decision. And although it's standard operating procedure to jump all over a fighter after one loss, Juarez is *not* finished. After his brave stand, you'd have to be crazy not to want to see him again.

What about those two points referee Tim Adams took from Soto for hitting behind the head? Most referees bend over backward to avoid penalizing fighters in a big event. They may be well-meaning, but Adams, like the judges, got it right. Soto was warned, his punches behind the head were flagrant, and physicians tell us rabbit punches to the brain stem may be the most deadly shots a fighter can throw. Instead of asking Adams to follow the lead of other referees, it should be the other way around. ■

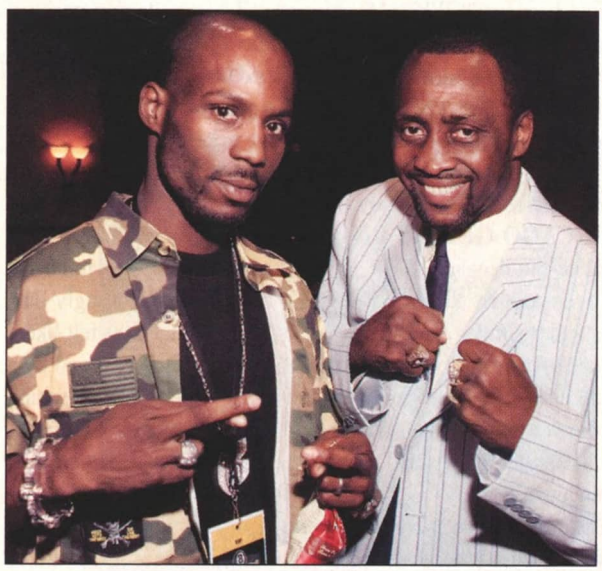
CAMERA CLICKS

PHOTO BY DAMIEN MEYER/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

We all know Mike Tyson likes fast cars—and we also know he's the guy to ask if you're in your fast car and you need directions to Bolivian. Tyson had the opportunity to talk to a couple of Ferrari technicians at the Turkish Grand Prix in Istanbul in August, where he took in the race and delighted the crowd with his attempts to nail down the lyrics to "Istanbul (Not Constantinople)."

PHOTO BY CHINA PHOTOS/GETTY IMAGES

The Butterbean show may have worn out its welcome here in the United States, but it apparently still has some legs in China, where The Bean and opponent Kenny Craven stopped in at a blood drive a few days before tangling in Beijing. Butterbean actually failed in his attempt to hang a loss on Craven—evening their career series at two wins apiece—and he also failed in his attempt to rip this defenseless Chinese woman's arm out of its socket.



Rapper DMX's latest album is entitled **Here We Go Again***—which also expresses quite nicely how everybody feels about the latest comeback of 46-year-old Tommy Hearns. The two superstars met up recently at the International Pool Tour World 8-Ball Championship at Mandalay Bay in Las Vegas, and here's hoping that Hearns had a great time and decides to pursue a career in pool instead of pugilism.*

PHOTO BY NADINE RUPP/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

It never was easy to put Henry Maske on the canvas, but painter Wainer Vaccari finally succeeded. The painting of long-reigning light heavyweight titlist Maske, who was never knocked out and in fact lost only once in a 31-fight career, was part of a boxing art exhibit called "Wainer Vaccari—Fighters" that was displayed in Hamburg, Germany, toward the end of the summer.

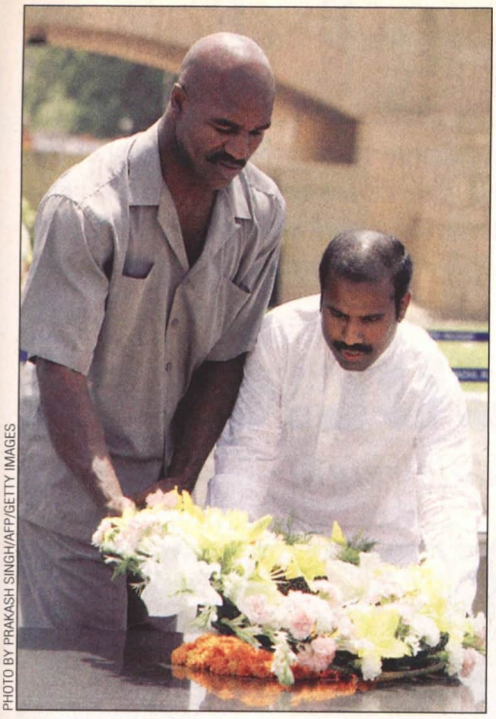


PHOTO BY PRAKASH SINGH/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Just because they won't let you fight in New York doesn't mean you have to go all the way to India, Evander. Legendary heavyweight Evander Holyfield went to New Delhi in August to meet with K.A. Paul, the chairman of Global Peace Initiative, and lay a wreath on the memorial to Mahatma Gandhi. It should be no surprise that Holyfield would be down with Gandhi, as they shared a common unswerving persistence, but you might also expect to see someone like Jorge Arce honoring a man who blazed such trails in weight cutting and hunger management.

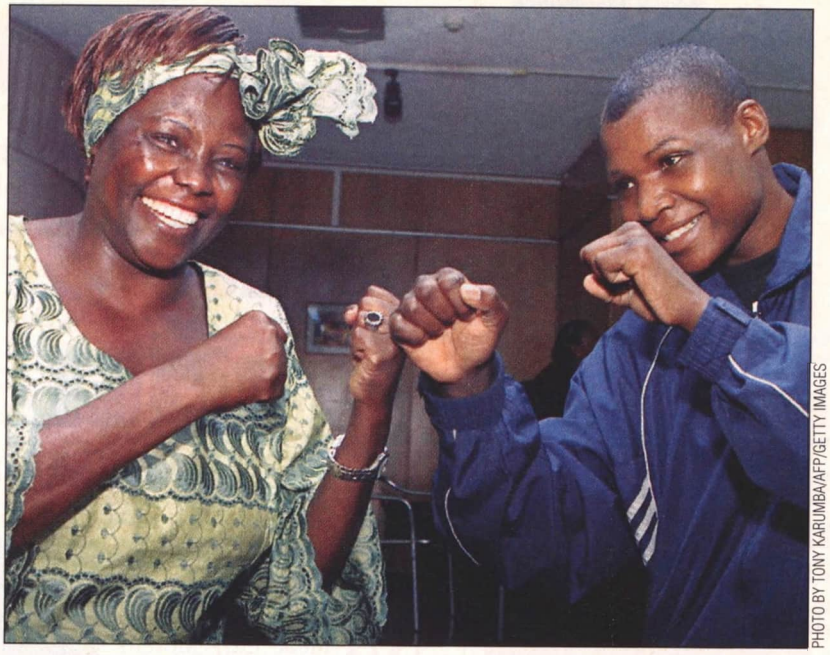


PHOTO BY TONY KARUMBA/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Something's wrong with this picture when the 2005 Nobel Prize laureate and Kenyan deputy environment minister is striking a more correct boxing stance than the professional female fighter. Wangari Mathaai (left) posed with Kenyan middleweight (and Vuyani Bungu look-alike) Conjestina Achieng in August at the launch of a U.N. advocacy campaign focusing on the eradication of poverty and hunger in Africa.

NOSTALGIA CORNER

PHOTO BY MICHAEL BUCKNER/GETTY IMAGES

It's seems like somewhat of an oxymoron to have a championship belt that says "contender" on it, but nevertheless, that's one thing Peter Manfredo and Sergio Mora were set to fight over in their October rematch. By the way, is it just us, or does it look like Sergio's been pronouncing the first syllable of his last name a lot at the dinner table lately?

Former light heavyweight champion Gus Lesnevich seems unsure of what to with the bowling pin wielding Jayne Mansfield during a break in the filming of the 1957 movie, Will Success Spoil Rock Hunter? *Our advice to Gus: Clinch and don't let go until the ref pries you apart with a crowbar.*

NEW FACES

JOEL JULIO

Junior Middleweight

By Don Stewart

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Main Events Vice President Carl Moretti wasn't at an arena, fight club, or gym when he first discovered Joel Julio. Actually, he found out about the 20-year-old Colombian welterweight the way many pre-teen boys learn about the opposite sex—he bought a magazine.

Moretti was flipping through an issue of the British-based weekly *Boxing News* when he stumbled upon a fight report from Las Vegas. In the story, American correspondent Jim Brady described Julio's three-round decapitation of Antonio Soriano last November. Moretti's interest was piqued.

"I said to myself: 'Boy, based on what I'm reading here, I gotta look at him.'" he recalled. "I'd never heard of the kid. I got a tape of the fight. He wasn't fighting anybody special at all, but the way he knocked him out really showed me something. He was charismatic and was really putting his punches together."

Moretti contacted Miami promoter Felix "Tuto" Zabala Jr., Julio's advisor in the United States. The two agreed to work together, which led to Julio's ESPN2-televised blowout of Carlos Vilches in April and his first-round stoppage of Arthur Medina on the Floyd Mayweather-Arturo Gatti undercard in June.

Julio then officially signed with Main Events in mid-July. He made his debut under the company's promotional banner on August 20 with an exciting fourth-round knockout of Christopher Henry on the Fernando Vargas-Javier Castillejo undercard in Chicago.

"It's really weird how it came about," Moretti admitted.

By catching up on his reading, he might have made the biggest find in Colombia since the country's coffee growers dug up Juan Valdez and his donkey. Yes, only five of Julio's fights have been outside of his native land, but he's left quite an impression in his limited action abroad.

"Here in the States we tend to dismiss for-

(Continued on page 55)

PRO RECORD

2001		
May 16	Jorge Perez, Monitos, Colombia	KO 4
Aug. 8	Luis Ramirez, Colombia	KO 1
Aug. 31	Jose Durante, Monteria, Colombia	KO 1
Sept. 23	Leonardo Abgulo, Colombia	KO 1
Dec. 12	Piacido Coneo, Canalete, Colombia	KO 2
2002		
Feb. 22	Manuel Sarmiento, Colombia	KO 2
March 12	Herman Gutierrez, Bogota, Colombia	W 6
Apr. 30	Julio Colorado, Monteria	KO 4
May 31	Jose Guaranda, Colombia	KO 3
Sept. 9	Eduardo De LA Cruz, Bogota	KO 9
2003		
March 1	Cesar Piedrahita, Colombia	KO 2
March 29	Angel Granados, Bogota	KO 4
July 4	Pedro Lopez, Monteria	KO 2
July 26	Carlos Robles, Bogota	KO 1
Oct. 8	Lino Perez Jr., Colombia	W 10
2004		
March 6	Saul Torres, Colombia	W 8
Aug. 21	Eliseo Ferias, Colombia	KO 2
Sept. 18	Elias Ruiz, Colombia	KO 2
Nov. 5	Antonio Soriano, Las Vegas, NV	KO 3
Dec. 3	Maamar Hadidi, Alfafar, Spain	KO 3
2005		
Feb. 11	Aurelio Julio, Cartagena, Colombia	KO 1
Apr. 8	Carlos Vilches, Miami, FL	KO 3
June 25	Arthur Medina, Atlantic City, NJ	KO 1
Aug. 20	Christopher Henry, Rosemont, IL	KO 4

FIGHTS	WON	LOST	DRAW	KOs
24	21	0	0	21

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HOPKINS VS. TAYLOR II

PHOTOS BY JAN SANDERS/HBO

10 Crucial Questions

Surrounding The Middleweight Championship Rematch

By Eric Raskin

The July 16 showdown between Bernard Hopkins and Jermain Taylor was supposed to be either a passing of the torch or a further affirmation of a living legend's greatness. It turned out to be neither. It was supposed to be a fight that would answer questions. It turned out that for every question that was answered, two new ones had to be asked.

Of those still-lurking questions, clearly the most important one is, who's the best middleweight in the world? Is it the 40-year-old man who dominated the last four rounds and was believed by the majority of the ringside press to have triumphed? Or is it the 27-year-old kid who got off to the faster start and went home with all of the belts following a controversial decision? There's only one thing that was certain in the aftermath of Taylor-Hopkins: This situation called for an immediate rematch.

On December 3, they'll do it again, the new champ making his first defense against the man whose historic reign he—or perhaps Duane Ford, depending on your point of view—ended 4½ months earlier. For the first fight, Hopkins was the close but clear prefight favorite; this time, there is no clear favorite. There are too many unanswered questions for anyone to declare either man an obvious choice to win, so we've decided to ask the 10 most crucial questions hovering over the rematch. And, unlike what happened on July 16, we'll do our best to provide answers to go with those questions.

1. Who has more potential for improvement?

Notice the question is not who *will* improve more. In a fight as close as this was the first time, that would be tantamount to asking simply who will win, and we'll get to that one later.

But as far as potential for improvement goes, it has to be Taylor. Hopkins is 40 years old (let's call him The 40-Year-Old Surgeon) and has more than 50 pro fights on his ledger, including 24 title fights; there simply isn't much more for "The Executioner" to learn. The only room he really has for improvement over the first fight is to start faster.

Taylor, on the other hand, is still learning, fight to fight, and, by watching the tape and seeing what went right and what went wrong, could take more lessons from the Hopkins fight than from his previous 23 fights combined. Going 12 rounds with an old master should always make a young fighter better, provided it doesn't involve a substantial physical beating, which this fight did not. Taylor needs to jab with more authority, he needs to throw straighter punches, he needs to stay off the ropes—all things he can work on in camp. If his nerves are calmer this time—and they ought to be, now that he's been in a superfight and knows what it's all about—he figures not to be as worn out in the latter stages of the fight, since nerves will often sap a fighter of his strength more demonstrably than a busy work rate will.

Taylor has the potential to be markedly better on numerous fronts than he was in the first fight. Hopkins, aside from pacing himself differently, really doesn't have all that much room for improvement.

2. Who gained more confidence from the first fight?

Forget about everything that happened after the scorecards were read. From the closing bell until the word "new" came out of Michael Buffer's mouth, Hopkins looked highly confident, Taylor highly uncertain. Taylor may well have watched the tape afterward, found seven rounds to score for himself, and pronounced in the weeks and months that followed that he won the fight. But at that moment when the 12th round concluded, Taylor was mostly just happy to have survived the defending champ's onslaught.

Taylor gained a modicum of confidence just from making it through 12 close rounds with Hopkins. He proved to himself that he could hang. But how much confidence does a boxer truly gain when he's clearly outclassed over the final four rounds of a fight? Hopkins not only believes unwaveringly that he won the fight, but he also probably thinks that he would have stopped his young foe if there had been a round 13. Hopkins may or may not actually be the better man, but he at least believes in his heart that he's the better man, and the onus is on Taylor to prove to "Ex" that he's wrong.

3. Is Hopkins capable of keeping a strong pace over all 12 rounds?

Based on the evidence presented over the last couple of years, no. Hopkins fought in spurts against Howard Eastman. He started at a very deliberate pace against Oscar De La Hoya. He never went all-out in his third fight with Robert Allen.

Hopkins' slow start against Taylor may have been due in small part to a cautiousness in wanting to wait and see what the athletic challenger had to offer, but it seemed the much greater factor was his own doubt about whether he had 12 fast-paced rounds in him. This is a common shortcoming of older fighters; they can do most of the things

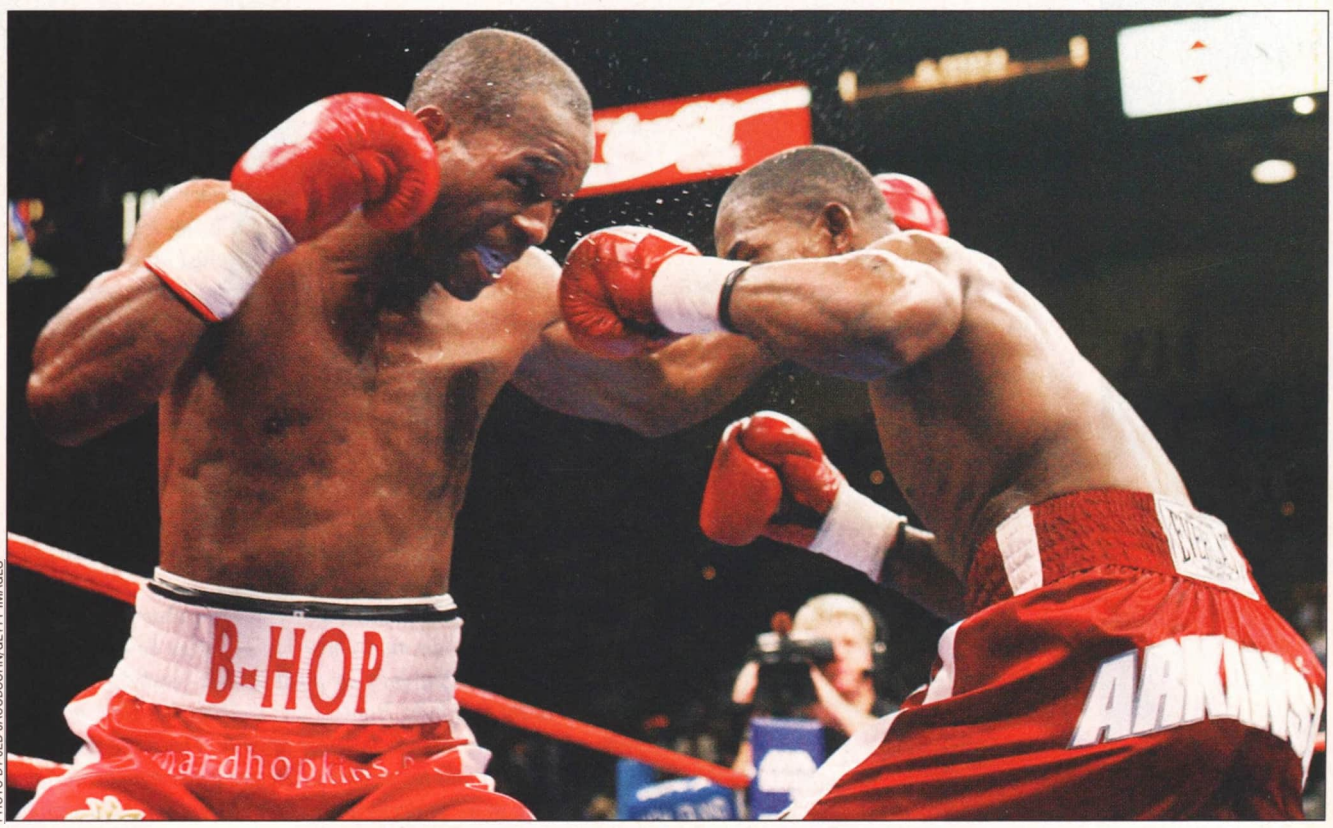


PHOTO BY JED JACOBSOHN/GETTY IMAGES

Hopkins and Taylor fire away at close range in their first fight. Unfortunately, this sort of exchange was rare in their initial encounter, which wasn't a particularly exciting fight. But the controversial nature of the decision has made the rematch virtually obligatory.

PHOTO BY JED JACOBSOHN/GETTY IMAGES

Taylor drives Hopkins into the ropes with a right to the face. It remains to be seen if the new champion gained enough knowledge and confidence in the first fight to win by a more substantial margin in the second time he faces "The Executioner."

they did in their youths, but they can't do them for a sustained length of time. Hopkins didn't start slowly because he was out of shape—just look at his body, he hasn't been out of shape in about a decade-and-a-half. He started slowly because it was the only way to ensure he'd be able to finish strong, and there's no reason to expect that to change. Maybe Hopkins will start faster than last time, but if he doesn't knock Taylor out early, he's going to need to take a few rounds off at some point.

4. Will Taylor be as motivated as he was as the challenger?

Here's where the controversial nature of the decision helps Taylor. Perhaps it didn't instill boundless confidence in the Arkansan, but it did allow him to become a world champion who still has plenty to prove. Perhaps if Buster Douglas had defeated Mike Tyson via close, controversial decision, he would have stayed hungry for his next fight rather than for his next slice of pizza. But he knocked Tyson out, and there was no higher mountain to climb. Taylor still has a mountain to climb because he knows not everyone is convinced he made it to the top the first time around. If anything, he rates to have more of a me-versus-the-world attitude and be even more motivated than he was in July.

5. HBO called their first fight "the most important fight of the year"; is this one even more important?

It absolutely is, because this one has finality. Everyone knew that if Taylor won

the first go-round, or if Hopkins won a tough, close fight, a rematch could follow. If Taylor wins again, there's no need for a third fight. If Hopkins regains his title, why would he want to risk losing it right back? This could be Hopkins' final fight either way, and even if he does squeeze in one more, it's doubtful that it will be against Taylor. So Taylor-Hopkins II is extraordinarily important because it will determine more decisively than the first bout whether or not the torch is passed to the next generation.

6. How detrimental would it be to the sport if Hopkins wins and retires as champion?

Hopkins can retire as champion in one of three ways: by beating Taylor and never fighting again, by beating Taylor and making one last successful defense next January, or by beating Taylor and taking one last big fight at super middleweight or light heavyweight, with the 160-pound title not at stake. Assuming any of these scenarios, it's bad news for boxing. If Hopkins retires as king of the division, the alphabet gangs will each quickly pair their two top contenders, and because alphabet rankings may as well be conceived by throwing darts at a list of names, those top two contenders will vary from one sanctioning body to another. So we'll have all sorts of semi-anonymous fighters battling for pieces of the title, and all of the great work Hopkins did unifying the title will be undone. If, say, Taylor were to lose narrowly to Hopkins and The Executioner were to never fight again, in a fistic fantasy world, everyone would agree that Taylor vs. Winky Wright should fill the vacancy and that would be that. But this is boxing, and Jose, Gilberto, and Marian would never let that be that.

Clearly, Hopkins retiring with the title is not what the sport needs. Just look at what's happened in the heavyweight division since Lennox Lewis retired almost two years ago. If you're dying to call the glass half full, you can take solace in the fact that the middleweight division doesn't carry the importance of the heavyweight division. But the truth is having *both* divisions in a state of chaos is like having one completely empty glass in front of you.

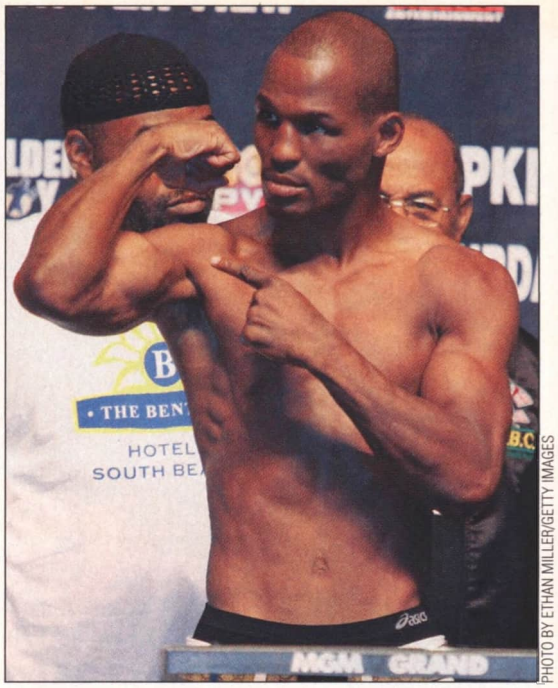


PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

Conditioning has never been a factor for Hopkins, who still appears to be in magnificent shape at age 40. But the big question is whether he waited until the last four rounds to open up because he can no longer fight hard for the full 12, or because he miscalculated.

7. What does history tell us?

History isn't too much help here because of most of the time; it's the old champion who gets helped out by the judges (see Louis-Walcott I, Holyfield-Lewis I, Ali-Norton III, etc.), not the younger challenger. At the end of the HBO Pay-Per-View broadcast of the first fight, Max Kellerman compared this to middleweight champ Carlos Monzon struggling to controversially outpoint Rodrigo Valdes late in his career before winning the rematch more decisively and retiring. But as Kellerman noted, the difference there was that Monzon actually got the decision the first time around.

Perhaps the closest parallel would be Michael Spinks vs. Larry Holmes. In their first fight, Spinks ended the aging heavyweight champ's historic reign via close, debatable decision, Holmes didn't exactly endear himself to the media with his post-fight attitude (sound like anyone we know?), and they signed for an immediate rematch. In the rematch, Spinks won again—and this time it wasn't merely debatable, it was considered by many to be an out-and-out robbery. So if we're using history as our guide, Taylor can be expected to win again, perhaps even more controversially than last time.

PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

Trainer Dan Birmingham works on Taylor between rounds. Note the large glob of cut medicine on top of Taylor's head, which was used to stem the flow of blood from a nasty gash that resulted from a clash of heads. Taylor showed commendable composure by not allowing the injury to fluster him.

PHOTO BY JED JACOBSOHN/GETTY IMAGES

Hopkins lands a right hand during his late-round charge in the first Taylor fight. There is, of course, the possibility that the second fight will follow a similar pattern and the result will be another close, controversial decision.

8. Will the judges bend over backward to make up for Duane Ford's blunder?

As we just alluded to, if it was anyone but Hopkins, they might. But Hard 'Nard is about as anti-establishment as any boxer in recent years, and quite a few folks have wondered out loud if that's why Taylor won seven rounds on two cards in July, including the smoking-gun 12th on Ford's card. The guess here is that there won't be any makeup calls. If it goes the distance and Hopkins doesn't pound the crap out of Taylor in at least seven of the 12 rounds, he's going to have a hard time winning.

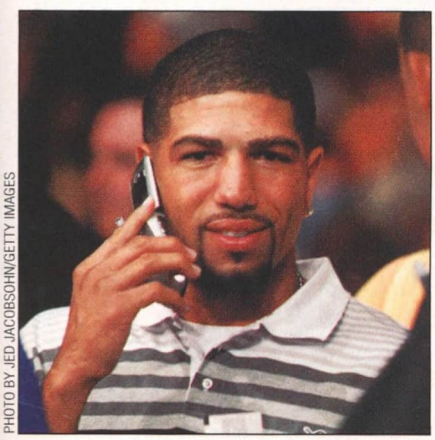


PHOTO BY JED JACOBSOHN/GETTY IMAGES

Winky Wright, pictured ringside at the first Taylor-Hopkins bouts, is the most logical and deserving challenger for the winner of Taylor-Hopkins II. But if Hopkins wins and retires still champ, the various alphabet groups will most likely throw the 160-pound division into chaos.

9. Who has the better chance of scoring a knockout?

This is a really difficult question to answer, because the smart money says they go the distance again. Hopkins has a great chin and was never hurt by Taylor in the first fight (though he was knocked off-balance once, in the second round). Taylor took more than his share of flush punches in the last four rounds and never seemed particularly close to going down.

But if you fell into a coma tomorrow and woke up on the morning of December 4 and were told that the fight ended in a knockout, your guess should be that it was Taylor who kayoed Hopkins. The reason: Taylor has knockout power. Hopkins really doesn't anymore. If not for the liver shot against De La Hoya, Hopkins would have gone the distance in his last five fights. The Philadelphian was a scary puncher until the age of 30, but it's been nearly eight years since he last scored a stoppage in less than seven rounds. They say the punch is the last thing to go for an older fighter, but for Hopkins, it seems to have been the first thing.

The chances of Taylor landing a knockout punch against Hopkins are undoubtedly slim. But at least he has that knockout punch in his arsenal.

10. Who will win?

This may sound like a cop-out, but the most likely scenario is another close fight in which Hopkins does enough to win, but the title stays wrapped around Taylor's waist. (This way, no matter who wins, we can claim we called it correctly.) Hopkins will start faster this time and maybe even hold a slight lead (on our cards) at the halfway mark, but he'll need to take a couple of late rounds off, and Taylor will have gained the necessary experience to outwork the 40-year-old during those lulls. This one's going to be close all the way—and we shouldn't be shocked if it ends with an irate Hopkins barking that Carlos Monzon couldn't have held his jockstrap. ■

RAHEEM UPSETS MORALES

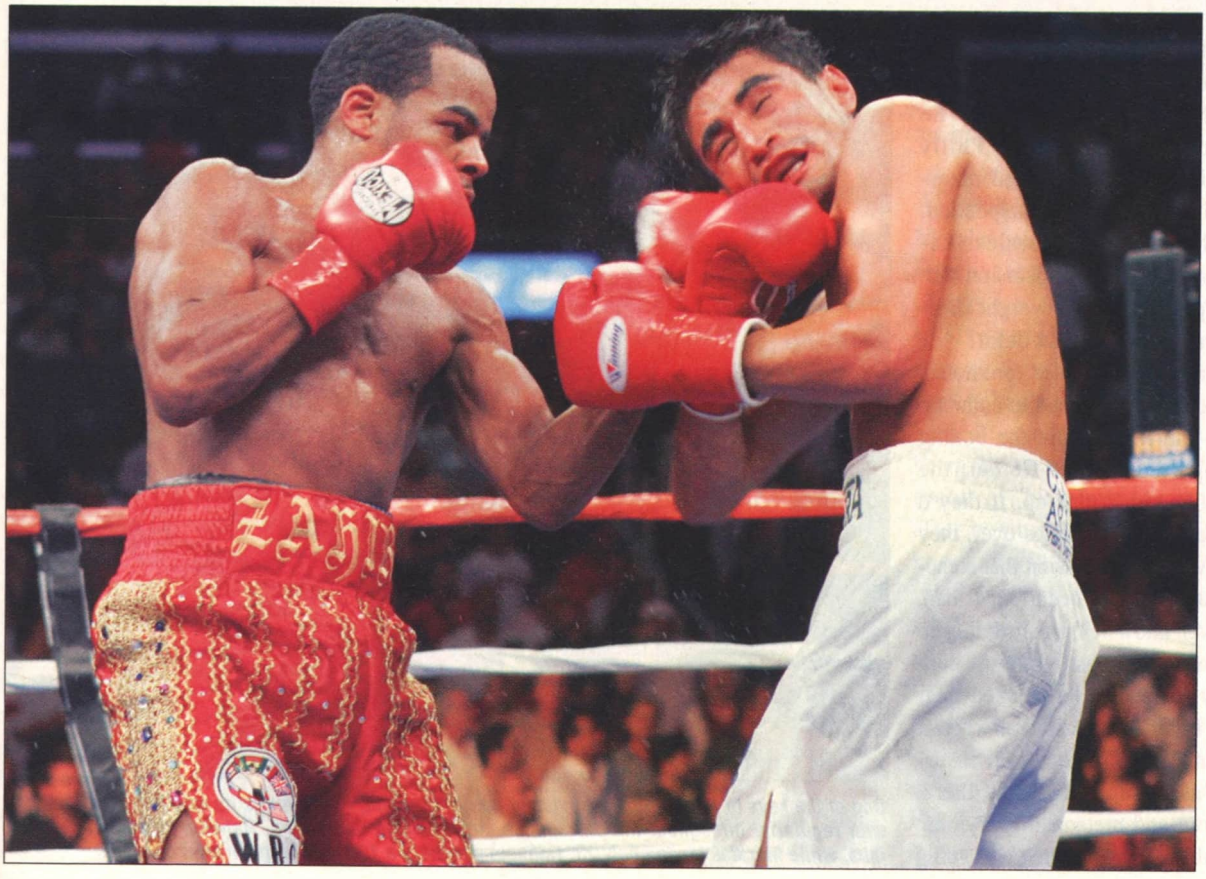
Shhhh . . .

PAC-MAN VS. EL TERRIBLE IS STILL ON!

By Ivan Goldman
PHOTOS BY JAN SANDERS/HBO

It all started innocently enough. Two promoters put together a couple of tune-ups to head a card in Los Angeles aimed at pumping up enthusiasm for the big fireworks to come—a can't-miss rematch between stars Manny Pacquiao and Erik Morales. The two popular fighters drew a crowd of 10,684 (mostly Mexicans and Filipinos) to a card that most of them could have seen at home on HBO.

What was supposed to a perfect infomercial for the Morales-Pacquaio rematch turned out to be a decidedly mixed bag. Pac-Man took care of his end of things by stopping Hector Velazquez (above), but Morales was upset by underdog Zahir Raheem, who handily outpointed the Mexican favorite (below). That didn't upset Bob Arum's plans, though.



Promoter Arum, pictured with Pacquiao following the Filipino's TKO of Velazquez, is determined to go ahead with the Morales-Pacquiao rematch regardless of the fact that Morales was defeated by Raheem.

The 26-year-old Pacquiao, with his exciting style and freakish firepower, gradually took apart the game, striving, but overmatched Hector Velazquez, stopping him at the 2:59 mark of the sixth round. But then a not-so-funny thing happened on the way to the rematch. The night's second sacrificial lamb, Philly trickster Zahir Raheem, revealed razor-sharp teeth; he outsmarted, outspeeded, and outfought Tijuana's Morales. Raheem's unanimous 12-round decision victory shook up at least two weight divisions, changing everything. Or did it?

As the catastrophe unfolded, promoters Bob Arum and Gary Shaw had to come up with a plan—and fast, before the boxing media all departed Staples Center, the scene of the disastrous tune-up. If they'd taken a few days to think things over, they might have given the impression that something significant had just occurred. It had, but you'd never know it from listening to Arum and Shaw at the postfight press conference. They seemed to have taken their cue from the Bush Administration when it ran smack into a prolonged Iraqi insurgency that wasn't supposed to be there. They acted cool and pretended everything was as it should be. The rematch was going ahead as planned, and so what's the big deal?

Rival promoter Dan Goossen said Arum, who promotes both Morales and Raheem, outdid Don King, who's earned a reputation for stepping over the prone bodies of his fallen fighters to make contract music with the winner. "Bob not only stepped across the fallen fighter," Goossen said. "He picked him up. Then he took the winner who had his hand raised and cast him aside. It's embarrassing, and certainly something not good for our sport or good for his client, Raheem, who just came off this great victory but does not get rewarded for it."

It should be mentioned that Goossen and Arum have a history. Arum once scheduled a card directly aimed at subtracting attention and dollars from a Goossen card the same night. As so often happens in boxing, the promoters can be more vicious and colorful than the fighters they promote. Morales, Pacquiao, or Raheem can't match them in the hostility department.

As they stared at the broken pieces of their rematch extravaganza, Arum and Shaw, who promotes Pacquiao, suddenly had to deal with Raheem, an overlooked but seriously talented lightweight who just needed a chance to prove himself. The boxing scribes, excited as always by the unexpected, were trying to figure out where the 28-year-old Raheem, a member of the 1996 Olympic team, would turn up next. Would he sub for Morales and take on Pac-Man?

But that scenario, though logical on the boxing side of the equation, made no sense on the money side. In Morales, Arum had a mostly winning Mexican fighter who loves to trade and who had already built up a terrific fan base. Generating serious cash with a smallish African-American speedster like Raheem is a whole other story.

As for Shaw, ever since their first match back in March, he also had dreamed of a Pacquiao-Morales II super-event dripping with dollars. What was he supposed to do now? Pit his looking-oh-so-

One of the keys to Raheem's upset victory was his left jab, which found its way into Morales' face with regularity throughout the 12-rounder. According to CompuBox, Raheem connected with 50 jabs, while Morales landed only 23. Raheem also held a 161 to 85 edge in total connects.

The jab wasn't Raheem's only effective punch. He also cracked Morales with some sharp rights, staggering "El Terrible" with a flush right in the fifth. But the savvy former Olympian played it safe and never abandoned his boxing tactics in an attempt to stop his foe.

fine Pacquiao against a very difficult fighter with only a sprinkling of fans for a fraction of the money? Perhaps the two promoters recalled what consigliore Tom Hagen told the panicked Nevada senator who mistakenly believed he'd just murdered a prostitute. The Corleones, Hagen said, will take care of everything. "It would be as if she never existed," he said.

In some ways, pretending Raheem never existed—at least until after Morales-Pacquiao II—could be tougher than disappearing a dead prostitute. Millions of viewers saw him defeat Morales on HBO. But Shaw and Arum took their act one step further. They pretended the fight never happened. So Pacquiao, 40-3 (31), and Morales, 48-3 (34), get their big pay-per-view event on January 21, and Raheem gets—well, whatever he gets—Arum didn't say much about it. But you can bet that Arum had plenty to say privately to his chief matchmaker, Bruce Trampler, who had a big part in creating this mess. That was a tune-up like the Titanic ran into an inner tube.

As Arum worked to create a miraculous wave of mass amnesia, he bizarrely objected to the lopsided scoring in favor of Raheem. When's the last time you saw Arum complain one of his own fighters got too many points from the judges?

"I thought 115-113 was how I would have called it," he said. Officially, Julie Lederman had it 118-110, Dr. James Jen Kin saw it 116-112, and Raul Caiz Sr. had it 115-113, the score Arum found most attractive, given the circumstances. THE RING scored it 116-112 for Raheem.

Media scribes tended to see the fight closer than the judges. Morales hits harder, and unless you were right along the apron, it was difficult to see how effectively Raheem's most potent weapon, his jab, was getting in. In this match, CompuBox punchstats were good indicators. Morales landed 85 of 543 for 16 percent effectiveness, while Raheem landed 161 of 586, for 27 percent. He even managed to stagger Morales in round five, but stepped away. Later he admitted he was just being careful. Also, as Morales looked to trade in rounds 11 and 12, Raheem pretty much took the rounds off. In round 11, his glove touched the canvas after he absorbed a punch, an apparent knockdown. But referee John Schorle ruled it one of a string of Raheem slips, several of which were caused by a corporate sponsor's logo painted on the canvas.

To his credit, Arum did concede that, "Zahir won the fight and deserved to win the fight." But until Morales and Pacquiao get it on again, Arum may resort to Pig Latin when discussing Ahir-Zay Aheem-Ray from Iladelphia-Phay.

"Bob had his contracts in place, so damn the torpedoes, damn the results of the fight," Goossen said. "Bob's done a lot of amazing things, but this one is really the topper."

Pacquiao-Morales II is now a contest between "two losers," Goossen gleefully contended (because Pacquiao lost the decision to Morales in their first contest). The rematch is no longer worthy of pay-per-view, Goossen said. "It may be a good fight, but don't charge $30, $40, or $50 for it. Put it on HBO or Telefutura."

Goossen was still smarting over Arum's derogatory comments about the then-upcoming match between Marco Antonio Barrera and Goossen's fighter Robbie Peden. Arum had chided Goossen and Oscar De La Hoya's Golden Boy Promotions for making fans fork over pay-per-view money "to watch Barrera against his sparring partner." Yes, Goossen concedes, Peden used to be Barrera's sparring partner, "just as Larry Holmes was the sparring partner of Muhammad Ali."

After his defeat, a distinctly unhappy Morales, his face swollen from eating jabs all night, conceded that he's "a very bad fighter" when confronted with an opponent "who doesn't want to fight," which is how he categorized Raheem. But great fighters are supposed to destroy whatever's in front of them.

Said retired California matchmaker Jerry Bilderrain: "Morales is a crowd-pleasing Mexican, a scrapper. But he has to fight a similar type fighter. If he fights those types of guys, he's going to lose every time. He and Pacquiao were made for each other."

Everyone pretty much knows what to expect from Pacquiao. He will throw southpaw jabs and big lefts with only an occasional hook or uppercut, and won't employ a lot of head or foot movement, particularly as the fight wears on. But he will implement his simple strategy with great speed and tremendous force. And his opponents, though they know what to expect, can rarely do much about it. Velazquez, 42-11-2 (31), countered well for one round and kept countering until there were no more counters in him due to the force and frequency of Pac-Man's shots.

Morales, who began his career as a junior feather, has usually been the bigger

MANY OPTIONS FOR MANNY

After Manny Pacquiao finishes his business with Erik Morales in January, he will have to ponder whether it's still worthwhile for him to continue campaigning in the junior lightweight division. Pac-Man gave up THE RING featherweight championship in pursuit of 130-pound riches. Of course, if their rematch is as exciting as the first bout last March, Pacquiao and Morales might go at it a third time at 130. Also waiting there is Zahir Raheem. He's a difficult opponent, but Pacquiao is not one to avoid challenges. That's only one of the reasons he's the most popular person in the Philippines. After he stopped Velazquez, he was congratulated by President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo over the phone. Don't be surprised if she's in the audience for the rematch.

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARUNA

Pacquiao walks away from Velazquez moments before referee Lou Moret stopped the fight

Another 130-pounder out there for Pacquiao is Marco Antonio Barrera, who's smarting to avenge his knockout loss in their first bout. But if Pacquiao were to go back down to 126 instead, he could seek revenge against Juan Manuel Marquez, who fought him to a draw, or take on Scott Harrison, Humberto Soto, or Rocky Juarez—all excellent matches.

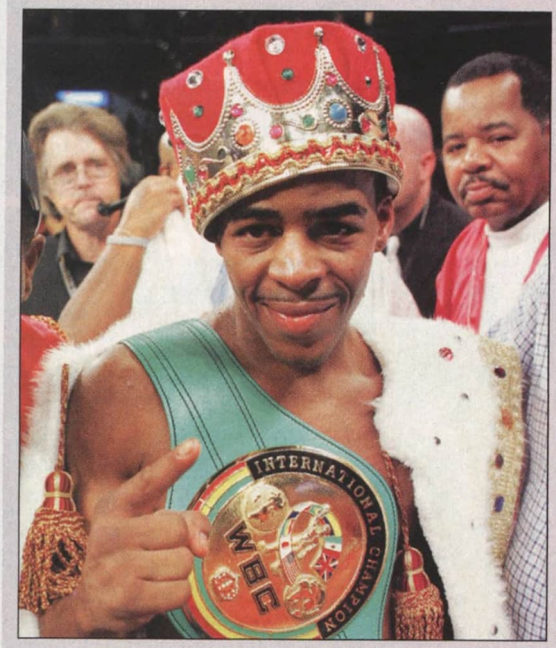
One would expect Pacquiao's new team of manager Shelly Finkel and promoter Gary Shaw to ask him to campaign in the weight division where he's most comfortable athletically. But the man calling the shots could be trainer Freddy Roach, who helped get his fighter out from under his former management team. Pacquiao is unlikely to side with anyone against father figure Roach.

Whomever he faces next, Pacquiao will almost certainly be prepared. He loves to train, providing he's not in Manila being treated like a rock star. Roach said they will put in eight weeks of camp preparing for Morales, and he doesn't want to do it in Los Angeles again, where Philippines expatriates clamor to see the workouts.

"We definitely underestimated [Morales] the first time, and we won't do that again," Roach said. **—IG**

THE ART OF AVOIDING RAHEEM

Managers generally try to avoid two kinds of nightmares: opponents who can lay out their fighters with one punch and opponents like Zahir Raheem—smooth, well-schooled movers who can hit and not be hit and make other fighters look slow and clumsy. But in most cases, the sluggers draw a bigger crowd. So given a choice, managers choose the slugger nightmare.



Raheem: Royalty at last

For nine years, Philadelphia's Raheem, who now resides in Las Vegas, took on local heroes in their own hometowns in the weight divisions of their choosing. He bounced around from junior feather to lightweight, where he appears to do best. It's hard to believe now, but he went off as an 8-1 underdog against Morales. His only loss was by unanimous decision in Texas to popular, undefeated local featherweight Rocky Juarez. It was one of the more odious hometown tilts seen this year. Texas referee Robert Gonzalez brazenly deducted three points from Raheem for fouls that occurred mostly in Gonzalez' mind.

Another notable performance was his eighth-round stoppage of worn but respected ex-champ Luisito Espinosa. Logic would call for a rematch with Juarez on neutral ground, but Raheem reportedly starved himself to make 126 pounds. He and his team announced after beating Morales they would take on all comers at 130 or 135, which leaves Juarez out of the picture.

Morales pledged to face Raheem again, and given his Mexican spirit, he no doubt meant it. Up at lightweight Raheem would find one of the hottest divisions in the sport and one of the toughest—Diego Corrales, Jose Luis Castillo, Juan Diaz, Julio Diaz, Juan Lazcano. It's a murderers' row that offers plenty of good fights and tough hombres willing to take them. **—IG**

man. Pacquiao is a featherweight who went up four pounds to fight him and could conceivably campaign as a junior feather if he wanted to. He started out as a mini-flyweight. Two years earlier, he weighed in for a fight at 120.

Morales made a late charge and finally managed to land some big punches, but Raheem took them well and never appeared to be hurt. It seems that Morales' power had become less effective as he moves up in weight. He said he'll move back down to 130 for Pac-Man.

But against Raheem, Morales was the smaller man for a change. They'd agreed to compete at 134. Raheem, 27-1 (16), came in a pound under, but Morales weighed in a quarter-pound over. He had to work it off and weigh in again to make the limit. It was a possible indication he just hadn't trained hard enough. He's been known to have difficulty getting ready for lesser fights. And although he has a reputation as a relentless puncher, Morales hasn't stopped anyone since he kayoed Guty Espadas in October 2003. At 31, he may have fought in one war too many. But that's been said before, and he's showed a miraculous ability to revive his career with his big-fight performances.

For some time the 126- and 130-pound divisions have been full of surprises. Barrera takes two out of three from Morales, but falls to Pacquiao, who loses to Morales. Juan Manuel Marquez comes off the canvas to earn a draw against Pacquiao, and now Raheem pounds on the door with a victory over Morales. However it all comes out, Raheem won't be mistaken for a tune-up opponent again anytime soon. ■

Ivan Goldman is THE RING's West Coast correspondent.

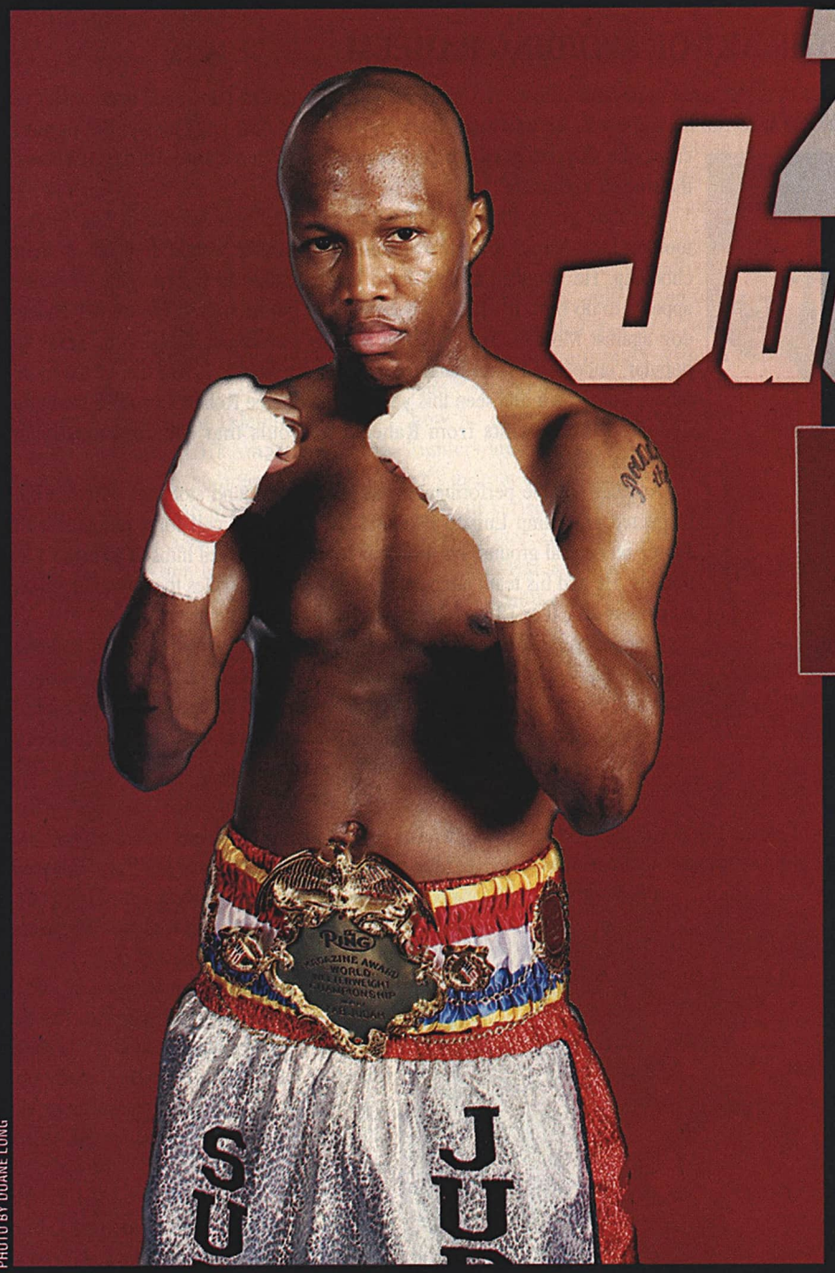


PHOTO BY DUANE LONG

Zab Judah VS. Floyd Mayweather

Don't Let Friendship Get In The Way Of Business

Mayweather (right) relinquished THE RING lightweight title belt to fight at junior welter. Now he would like to take the welterweight version away from world champion Zab Judah (left). It's currently the best match that can be made for either man, but negotiations have bogged down.

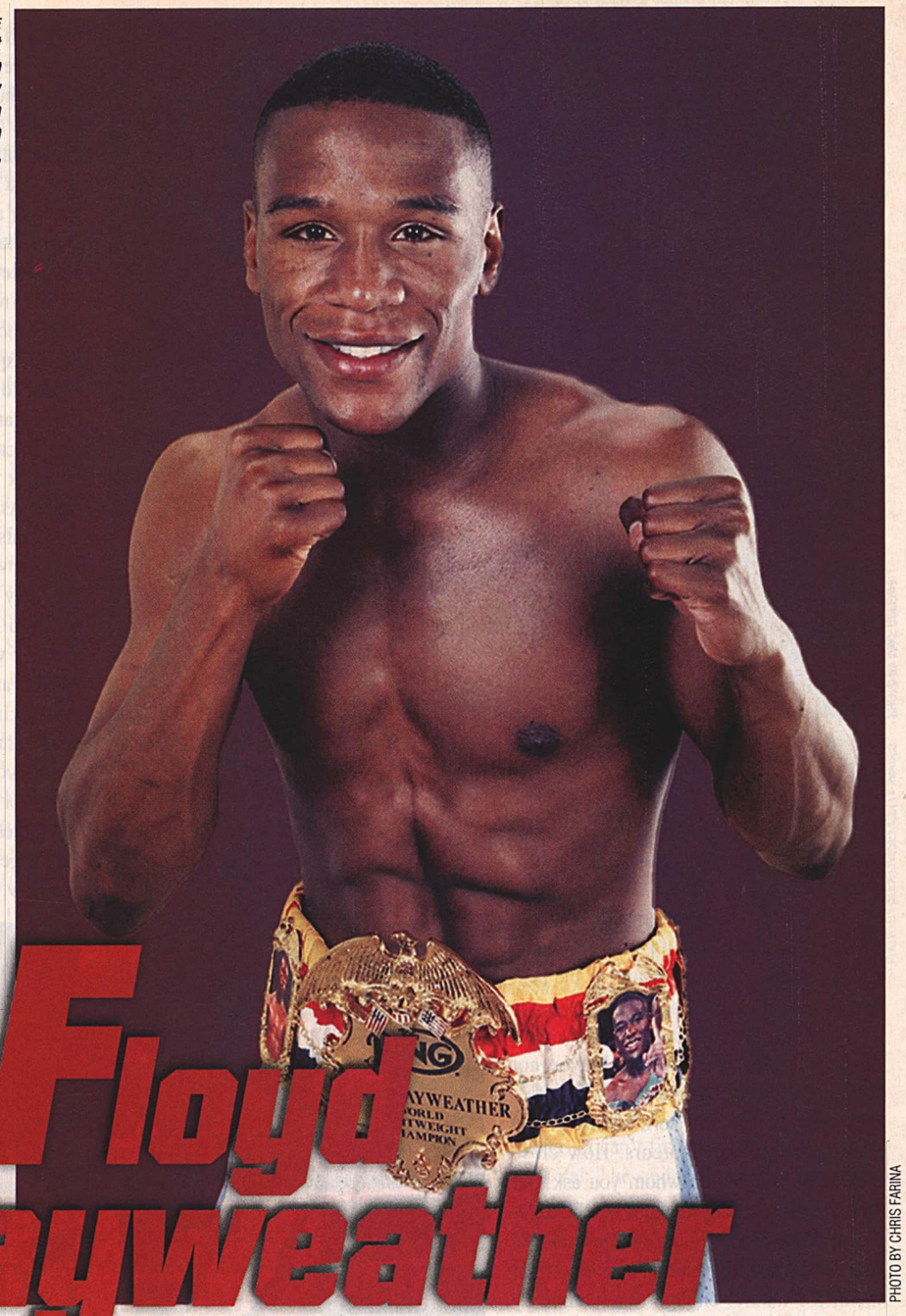


PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

By William Dettloff

Every time we turn around these days, two friends are fighting one another. Lamon Brewster and Kali Meehan were friends. Hasim Rahman and Monte Barrett were friends. Robbie Peden and Marco Antonio Barrera—friends. Shane Mosley and Oscar De La Hoya, first friends, then mortal ring enemies and now business associates, sit together ringside at Golden Boy cards and look like they want to get a room together. How do they know they'll never fight one another again?

Enough with the friendship already. It's overrated. Didn't anyone ever tell these guys? Friends come and go, especially for fighters. (Good hard cash, though, wisely invested, will love you whether you win or lose.) Mike Tyson's philosophy on the subject was sound, and you'll forgive us for paraphrasing: Never become friends with a person whose nose bone you might someday want to drive into his frontal lobe. It tends to complicate things.

Fortunately, most prizefighters are pragmatic about these things. They can agree beforehand, bless their hearts, that for the good of this cruel, cruel game and their bank accounts, to toss aside their better

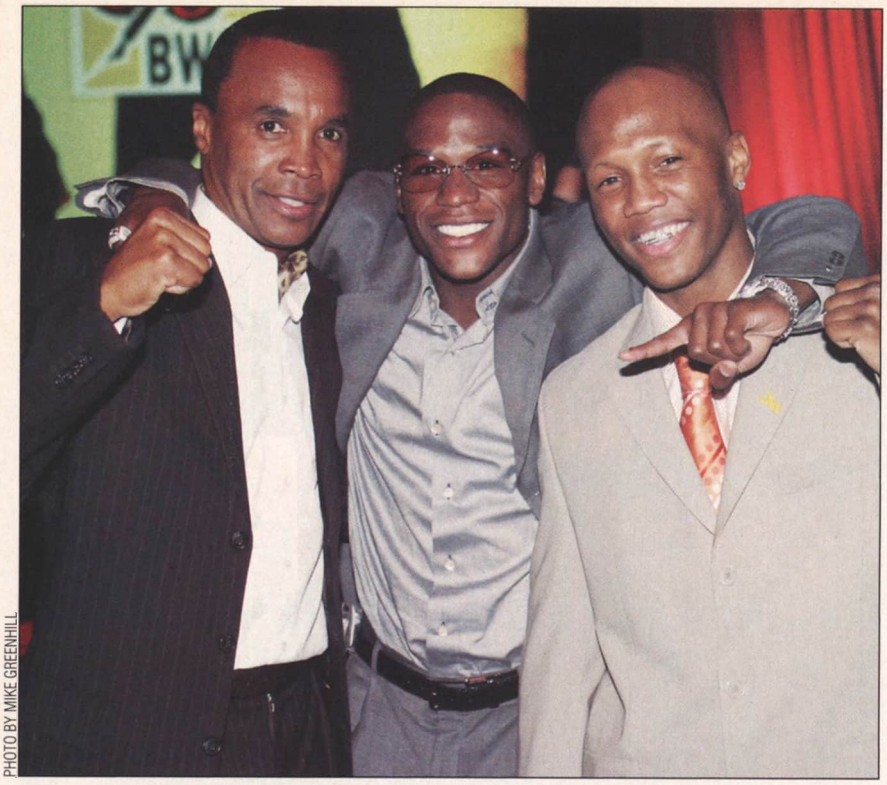


PHOTO BY MIKE GREENHILL

Best of buddies? Mayweather and Judah sure looked chummy when they posed with Sugar Ray Leonard at the Boxing Writers Association of America banquet, but since then they have been trading insults and challenges. Hopefully, it will provoke a match between them.

instincts and mutual affection for a night and try to give their good friend a concussion. Nothing serious or permanent. Nothing that will make peewee soccer practice uncomfortable or require handicap-accessible accommodations at the next neighborhood cookout.

Floyd Mayweather and Zab Judah, until fairly recently, were friends. Maybe not the kind who babysit each other's kids, but they were friends of a sort, having grown up together in the amateurs. How close they were depends on whom you ask, but when you fight long enough on the amateur circuit, you see the same guys all the time, and provided you don't have to fight them, it's natural enough that eventually you get chummy. Particularly when both are fast, flashy, outspoken types who dig the Hip-Hop and the Bling and the whatnot and all the things that would go eventually with the lifestyle of a successful contemporary prizefighter.

But, like others, Mayweather, 34-0 (23), and Judah, 34-2 (25), are prizefighters first and everything else second, so it was no great surprise when, shortly after Mayweather butchered poor Arturo Gatti, Judah—along with promoter Don King—called "Pretty Boy" out. It was a smart move that should lead to a natural pairing: Judah is the world champion in a decent welterweight division, but he hasn't a very big fight available. Mayweather probably is the best in a good junior welterweight class who is also, at this writing at least, without a major fight. And besides that, it's an intriguing matchup.

"As a matchmaker and a fan, I think it's a hell of a fight," said veteran matchmaker Don Elbaum. "Because of the way Judah has looked lately, especially against Spinks in their rematch, Zab Judah's a hot name among boxing people right now. You have two marquee names. It's a great fight-fans' fight. To the people who follow boxing closely and watch all the fights, it's very big. To casual fans, probably not."

Back in August, it was ready to be made. Aside from a couple of small sticking points, negotiations between the camps were moving along swimmingly. That is to say, they disagreed on: purse size (by $4- or $5-million); whether it would be for Judah's welterweight title or at a catchweight; and whether there would be a rematch clause in the contract. But that's piddly stuff, up there with how many hotel suites would be made available to each camp, or how many comps each fighter would get. It would all get worked out and they'd get together on what else but pay-per-view, on November 12. Great.

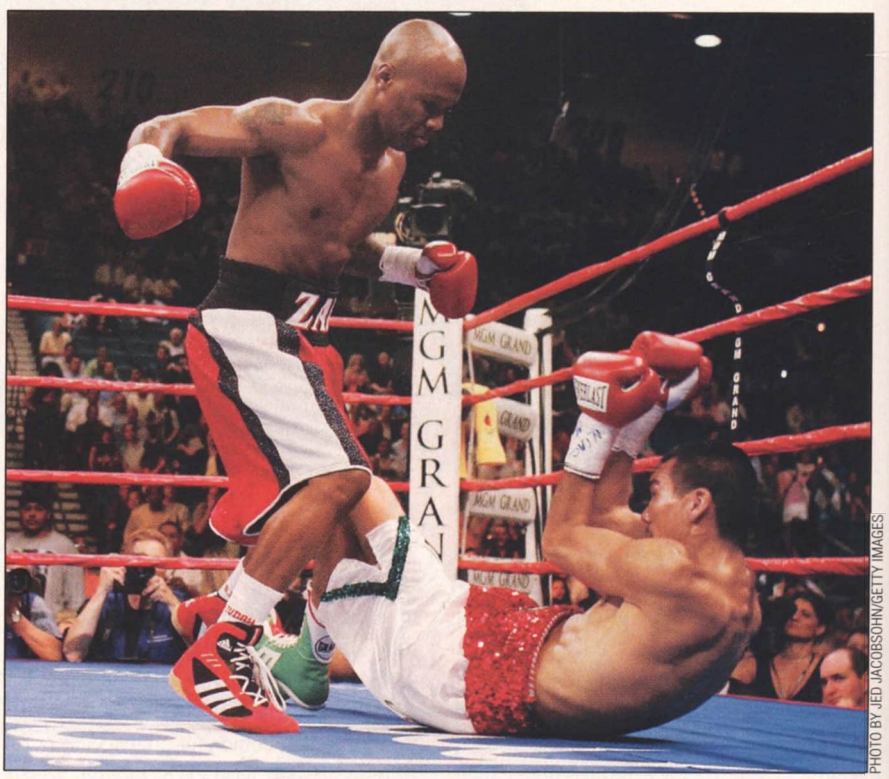


PHOTO BY JED JACOBSOHN/GETTY IMAGES

In his last outing, Judah made quick work of Cosme Rivera, knocking out his challenger in the third round, and next up was scheduled to be unheralded Carlos Baldimar. Neither is the sort of big-time opponent Judah needs to enhance his legacy and bank account.

But a funny thing happened: Top Rank, Mayweather's promoter, shocked even themselves and won the purse bid on the Vitali Klitschko-Hasim Rahman fight, and there went the November 12 pay-per-view date to two big oafs who wouldn't last three rounds with either Judah or Mayweather if they all were the same size.

"Mayweather-Judah stalled in mid-August," said Top Rank's Todd duBoef. "There were a lot of things happening with the heavyweights. Top Rank and Floyd Mayweather are very interested in that fight. It was just a problem with scheduling. We'll put it together 2006."

Whatever. We got stuck with Judah in an alphabet mandatory against Carlos Baldimar, which he will have won by the time you read this, and Mayweather against a lesser guy on November 19, whose identity wasn't known by press time, though Joel Casamayor and Sharmba Mitchell were reported to be in the running.

Either way, Mayweather-Judah is a no-brainer. Both guys are fast. They're both skilled boxers. They're ridiculously talented, and at or very close to the top of their respective divisions. It's one of the best fights that can be made. But it also is the only big fight out there right now for either guy.

Mayweather, you'll recall, after beating Gatti and more full of hubris than usual, set his sights on junior middleweight champion Winky Wright in a tantalizing and fascinating fight. That fell through when Mayweather wanted a bigger piece of the pie than Wright and his camp thought was fair. No great surprise there. After that, if you take Judah out of the picture, what is there at 140 for Mayweather?

The obvious answer is Ricky Hatton, but Hatton could hardly be expected to take on Mayweather in his first title defense. Give the guy time to make a little money, for cripe's sake. Let him fight in America once or twice and build it, or let Mayweather fight in England. The point is it's too soon for Mayweather-Hatton. A year or two, now maybe.

The answer is the same for Miguel Cotto: not yet. There's no denying that Cotto is good, maybe very good. But why throw him to Mayweather now? Let Mayweather get bigger, let Cotto grow into the next Felix Trinidad, and then do it. Besides, remember the trouble Cotto had with Demarcus Corley. Let the kid mature. He's not ready for Mayweather. Maybe he never will be, but it's too early now to find out in any case.

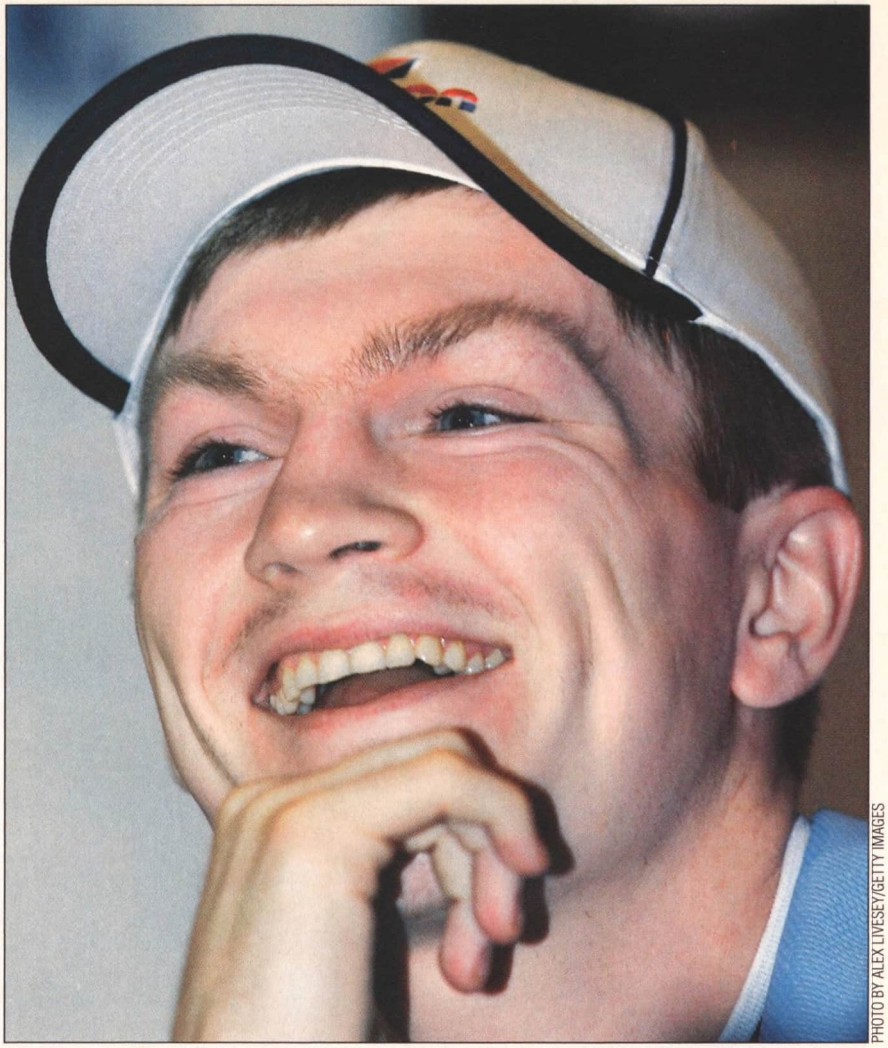


PHOTO BY ALEX LIVESEY/GETTY IMAGES

Most would love to see Mayweather, THE RING's number-one contender at 140 pounds, challenge world junior welterweight champ Ricky Hatton (pictured). But Hatton isn't about to make his first title defense against his toughest possible challenger.

So who else is there? Carlos Maussa and Vivian Harris will fight one another again before stepping up against anyone else, unless, as was reported as we went to press, Maussa would challenge Hatton. Mayweather's already beaten Corley, and no one will get excited about him against Lovemore N'Dou or Souleymane M'Baye. Kostya Tszyu hasn't officially retired yet, but the sense is that he will soon, and why would he want to tangle with Mayweather at this point in his life anyway? Who needs that kind of aggravation at 35 years old?

Clearly, Judah is the biggest fight out there for Mayweather. And Mayweather is about the only fight out there for Judah, according to Yoel Judah, Zab's father and trainer. "I can't find anybody that wants to fight Zab," he said. "We tried to get Shane Mosley, but he wants three more fights before he does anything. We tried to get Oscar De La Hoya; he doesn't want the fight. We tried to get Antonio Margarito, but he bid himself out. He said he wants $2.5- to $3-million. There's no way he going to get that and he knows it. He doesn't want the fight. Besides, he's straight-up garbage. He's too slow. Zab would hit him with six punches before he even knows what's happening and then be standing behind him. It's no contest.

"I got nobody to fight him. Kermit Cintron's out, Cory Spinks doesn't want the fight, Luis Collazo doesn't want the fight, Jose Antonio Rivera. We'd like to get Gatti, but Zab and Floyd would be the

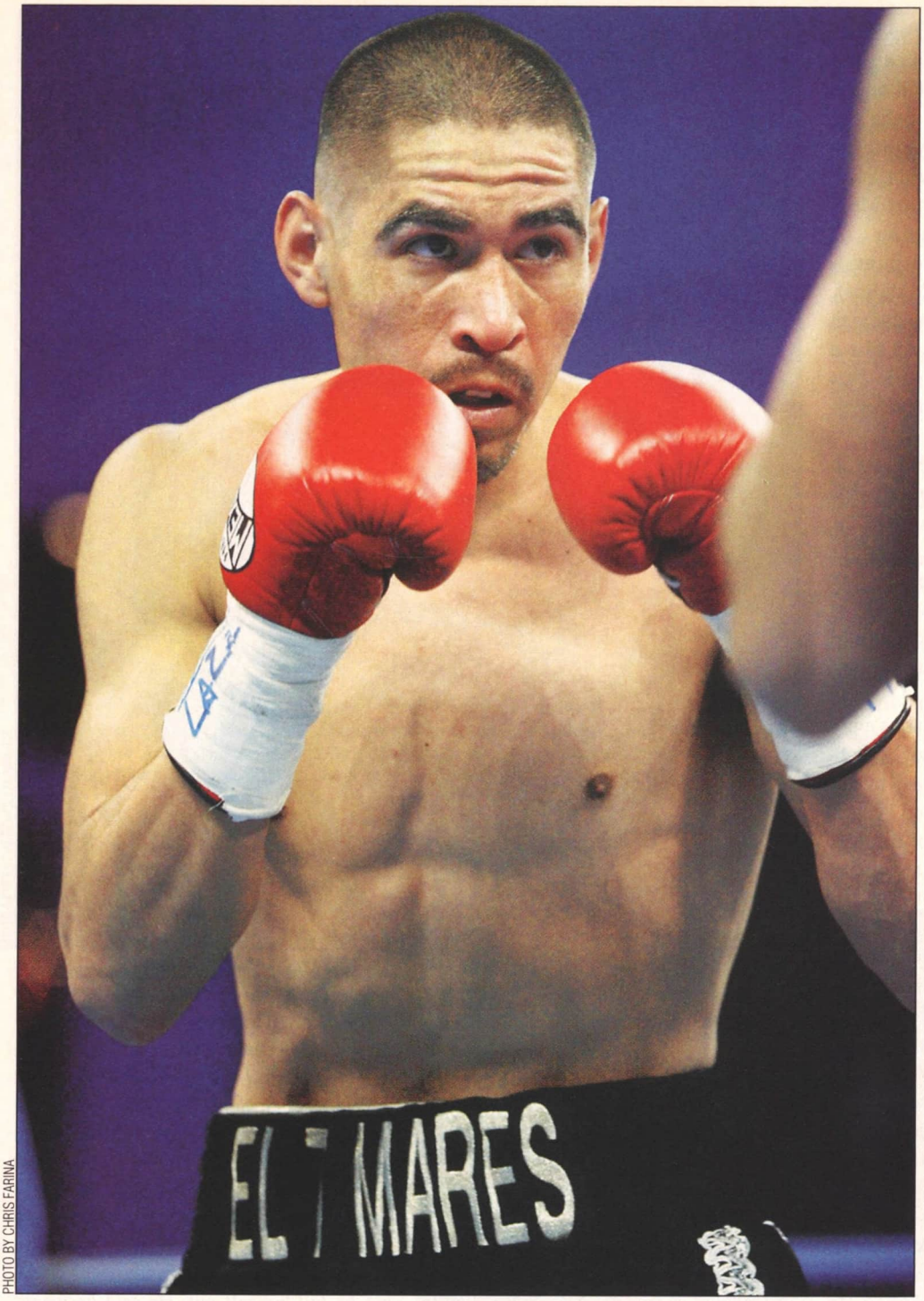


PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

Hardcore fans want to see Judah face top contender Antonio Margarito (picture), but despite Margarito's excellent credentials and pleasing style, he is said to want too much money.

biggest fight of the year. If Floyd Mayweather wins, he goes up. If Zab Judah wins, he goes up. These are the two top fighters in the world."

Nobody disputes that about Mayweather, though for many the jury is still out on Judah. Though it's been several years, few can forget how he was stopped by a single right hand from Tszyu. Subsequent outings against Rafael Pineda and Spinks did little to enhance his reputation. The win over Spinks in their rematch went a long way toward rehabilitating his standing, and his blowout of Cosme Rivera didn't hurt. But blowing out overmatched clubbers such as Rivera, and, presumably Baldimar, has never been a problem for Judah. His physical gifts—the speed, the power, the athleticism—were evident from the start. It's his fortitude and mental make-up that have been found wanting at crucial times in his career.

"Judah is good, but I see him as kind of a poor man's Roy Jones," Elbaum said. "Jones was talented, but strictly a front-runner. If he didn't get you out of there in a couple of rounds, all he wanted to do was keep you away. I think Judah is the same way."

Indeed, until recently at least, it is when he has been taken deeper in higher-level fights that Judah has faltered, or, at the least, failed to shine. Yoel Judah implies a fight with Mayweather wouldn't make it to the later rounds.

"They both have great speed. And they both got good defensive moves, and they're both slick," Yoel told THE RING. "And Floyd is a cocky kid. But I can't understand why he would take this fight. As far as punching power goes, Floyd Mayweather can't stay with Zab. I'm tellin' you: Zab hits three times harder than Floyd does. He can't punch with Zab. He just can't do it."

"We're going to go right to Floyd Mayweather," Judah continued. "He can't take Zab's shots. Chop-Chop hurt Floyd with a hook and Chop-Chop can't punch. Jose Luis Castillo hurt him too. Zab hits twice as hard as either of those guys. There's no way he can punch with Zab. No way."

Certainly, Mayweather would concede that Judah is the bigger puncher; he is the bigger athlete, having spent most of his career at 140 pounds before making the jump to 147. Mayweather won his first alphabet title at junior lightweight and some would argue that he's fighting at an unnecessarily high weight at 140, never mind 147. Indeed, he was no big puncher even at 135, and though he's stopped, at this writing, two of three of his opponents at junior welterweight, that had little to do with power; Henry Bruseles and Gatti

PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

Yoel Judah claims that Mayweather can't punch, but don't tell that to Arturo Gatti, who absorbed this picture-perfect right hand during his sixth-round TKO loss to "Pretty Boy" in June 2005. Punching power, however, has never been multitalented Mayweather's biggest asset.

were not in Mayweather's league in any respect.

Either way, if the fight never happens, it will not be because the fighters are friends. That friendship, which Judah seems to remember as closer than does Mayweather, was stunted, allegedly, by a sparring session that occurred in Las Vegas early in the year. The story is that Judah showed up to start training camp and Mayweather pounded him in a heated session. Then, to make matters worse, he talked smack to Judah, reminding him of his placement a full rung below the sport's elite.

That's not the kind of thing a fighter like Judah takes lightly, and that's good for us. This is about the best fight that can be made between 140 and 147 pounds, and we'd hate to have a little thing like friendship keep it from happening. We've got our priorities straight, after all. Thankfully, so do the fighters. ■

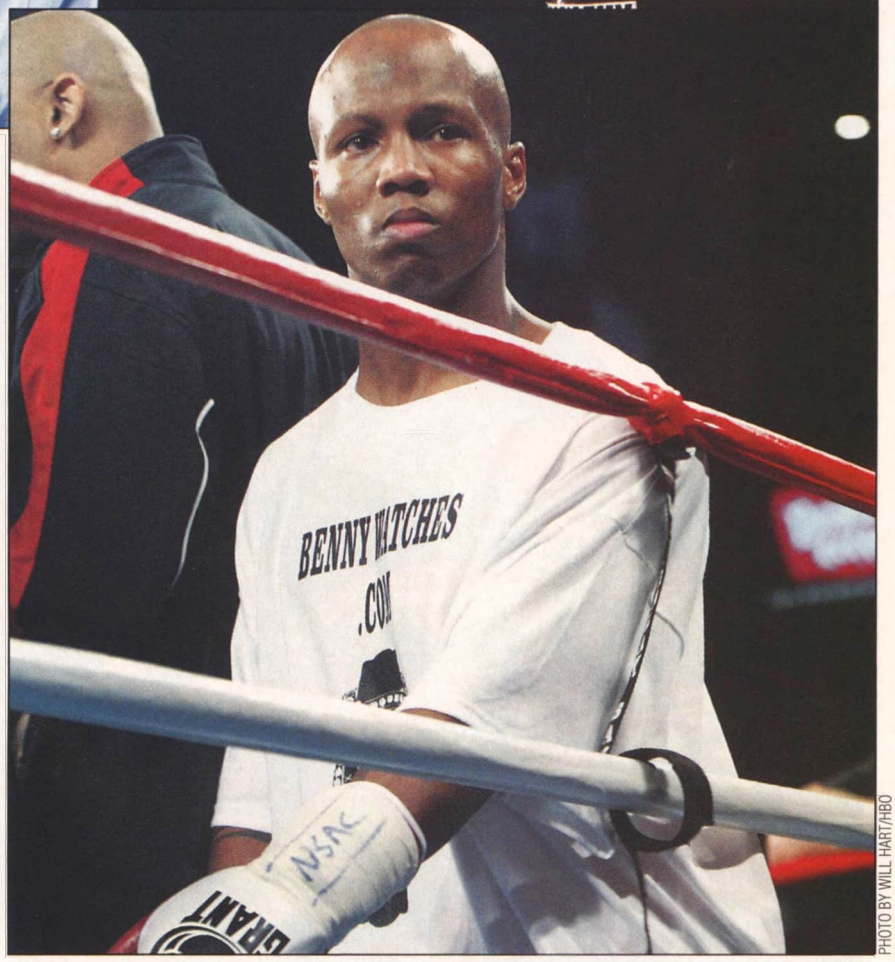
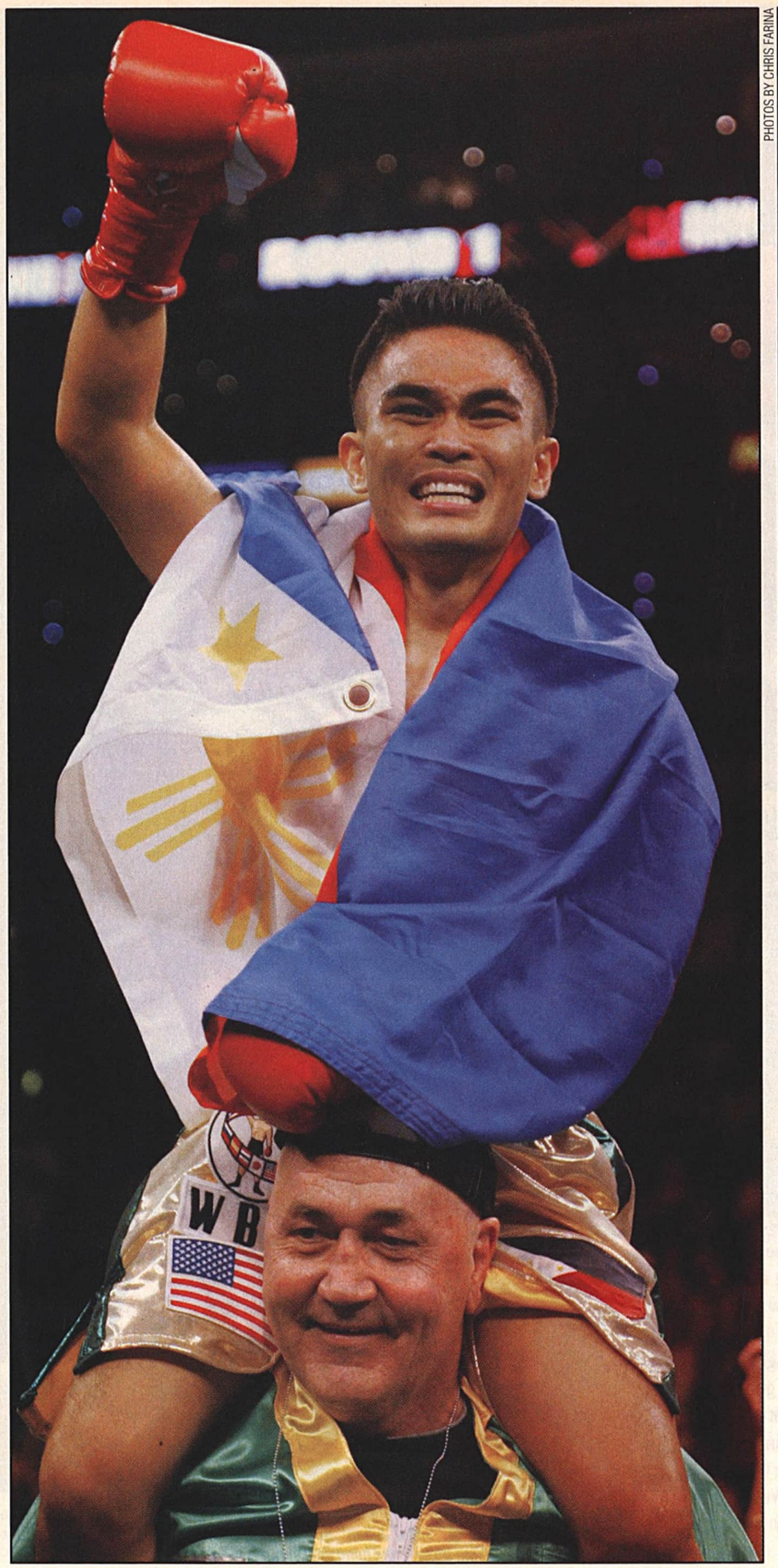
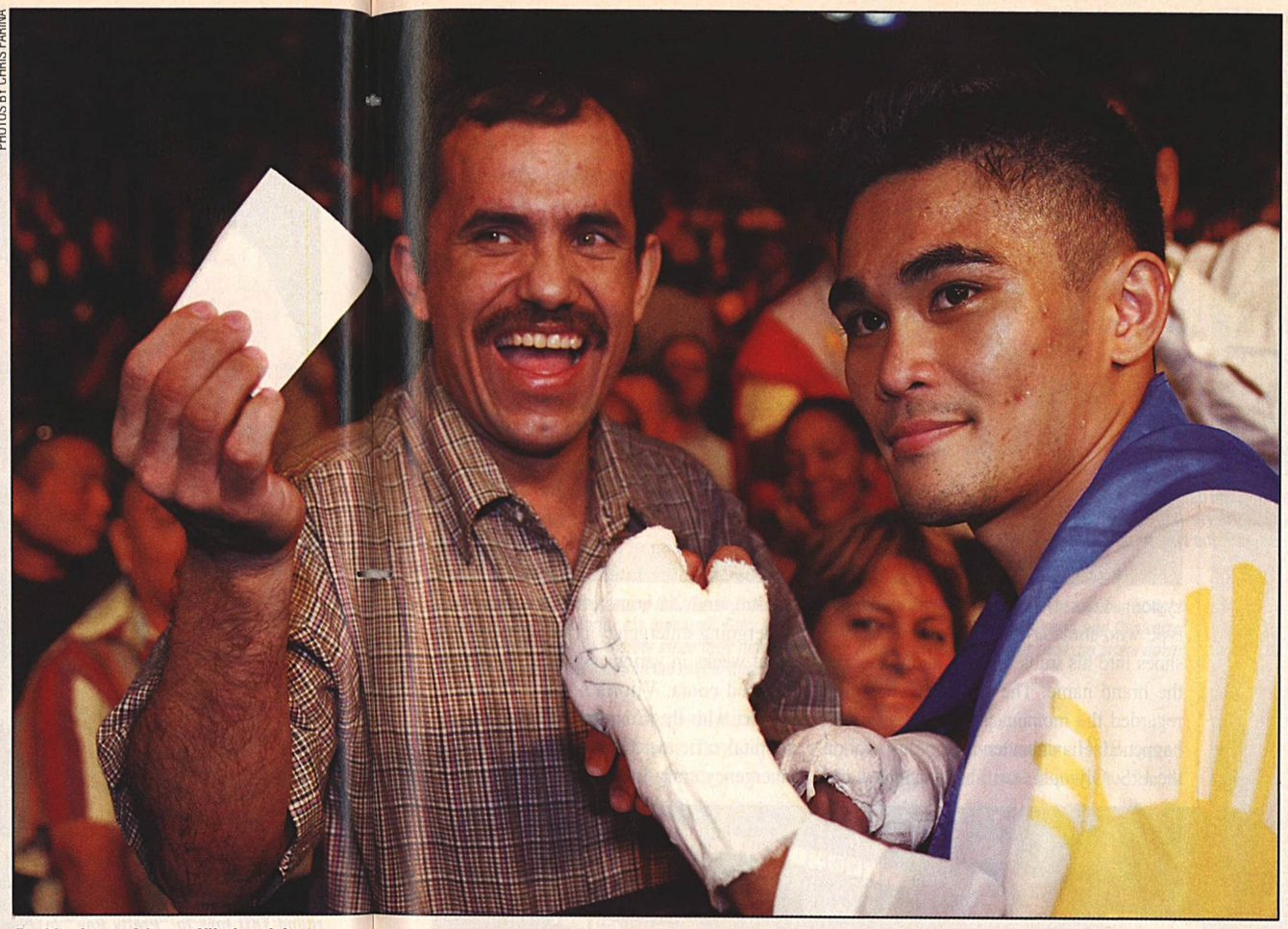


PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

A determined-looking Judah strides into the ring for his first bout with Cory Spinks. According to gym gossip, Mayweather got the better of "Super Judah" in a sparring session earlier this year and then rubbed salt into the wound by talking trash. Fans hope they settle their differences in a real bout.



PHOTOS BY CHRIS FARINA



Double victory: A joyous Viloria celebrates his one-punch kayo of Eric Ortiz (left) to claim an alphabet belt. Shortly thereafter, "The Hawaiian Punch" presented former kayo victim Ruben Contreras, who suffered a brain injury in their bout earlier this year, with a check (above).

INSPIRATION *from an* UNLIKELY SOURCE

Viloria *Finally Lives Up To His Potential*

By David Mayo

The lingering afterglow of bountiful good will that enveloped Brian Viloria in the aftermath of his first title claim stunned the little big man. He partied all night with the cast and crew of *General Hospital* after the victory, which wasn't so unusual, since he literally lives on the fringes of Hollywood and knows one of the soap's actors. Somewhat more unusual was a country-club shindig the following weekend in Los Angeles, where Sugar Ray Leonard and James Toney were among the boxing elite who feted Viloria. Yet amid those alohas, the Hawaiian's first titleholder ah-ha came less than a week after a one-punch, one-round knockout left him to confront the impact of title-winning fame.

It happened in Santa Monica, California, where Viloria found himself stuffing dozens of boxes into his car after granting a request to appear at a shoe store. It wasn't a publicly advertised appearance and Viloria did not sign autographs or distribute photos to customers. He essentially visited with the store's staff for a while, for no reason other than he was asked, and in return received dozens of boxes of free shoes.

Lesson one in fame: After years of strug-

PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

Viloria wades in against Brahim Asloum, who decisioned the American and went on to take the gold medal at the 2000 Olympic Games. Viloria hasn't lost since, streaking to 18 straight pro victories, 12 via kayo. Potentially, he can earn the type of money junior flyweights seldom see.

gles when all you want is a hand up, fame earns you a hand out. Fame is the ultimate backdoor payoff. Fame earns free stuff when the famous need it least.

Fame also can warp perspective for anyone prone to feelings of entitlement about such things, and while that may be less likely by nature for a 108-pounder working to break through boxing's caste system, Viloria certainly doesn't seem the type who someday might shove those free shoes into his trunk, only to mumble about the brand name. The scholarly champion regarded the moment pensively even as it happened. His unbeaten record, his spot on the U.S. Olympic team, his amateur world championship—none of that came free. So why the shoes?

"It made me feel bad," Viloria said. "I was used to working hard for everything. I worked hard to get to this position. And they really wanted me to have the shoes. But it felt weird coming home with 30 or 40 boxes of shoes, really for no reason except someone wanted to give them to me."

The other part of that dynamic is that Viloria has spent so much time giving recently, he may find receiving a bit uncomfortable.

One fight before blitzing Eric Ortiz for the WBC light flyweight title September 10 at Staples Center, Viloria fought a tune-up against Ruben Contreras in the same Los Angeles venue. During the sixth round of a relatively mundane fight, Contreras quit, complaining of a headache.

Ten minutes later, Contreras had a seizure, and 2½ hours after the fight was undergoing emergency brain surgery. He spent weeks in various stages of medically induced coma. Viloria's camp stayed in contact with the Contreras family through hospital officials. Contreras' wife gained emergency entry into the U.S. from Mexi-

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

Viloria walks away after ending the Ortiz match with a devastating right hand to the head in the opening round. It was the sort of dynamic performance that Viloria and his team hope will reinvigorate Americans' interest in the smaller weight classes.

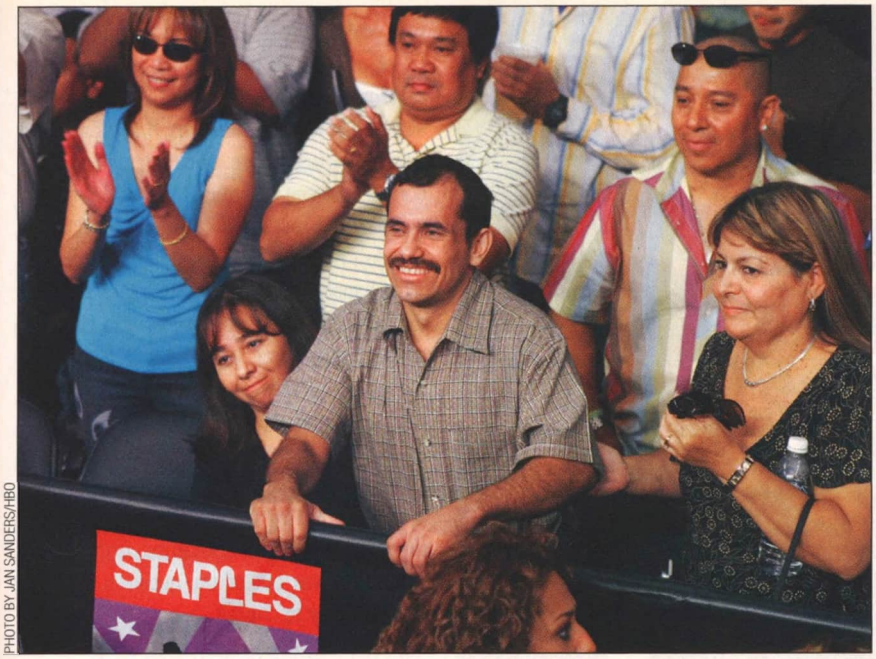


PHOTO BY JANI SANDERS/HBO

Contreras and his family enjoy the Viloria-Ortiz match. The injured fighter was aided by a number of fight people, including Viloria, his manager, Gary Gittelsohn, and promoter Bob Arum. Viloria and Contreras hadn't actually seen each other since their fight, and when Viloria spotted his former rival, he broke down and cried right before entering the ring to fight Ortiz.

co with immigration representation arranged by Viloria's manager Gary Gittelsohn, and promoter Bob Arum kept her hotel tab open for more than two months while her husband was hospitalized.

Contreras, a 33-year-old journeyman with almost twice as many losses as wins, won the ultimate fight for his life. When Viloria won the title four months after their fight, Contreras, walking with the aid of a walker but with many of his motor skills regained, sat ringside at Viloria's invitation.

"The relationship between fighters goes far beyond the ring," Viloria said. "After the fight, we're all human beings. That was a really trying time. I was contemplating whether I should be doing this. It was hard for me to believe my two hands could cause that kind of damage to his family and loved ones."

The fight immediately preceding Contreras occurred when Viloria wasn't planning to fight at all. He had been inactive more than six months, during which he had two fights cancelled. But when an HBO Latino main event was offered on two days notice, Viloria agreed to fight highly regarded Angel Priolo, in place of Gittelsohn-managed Fernando Montiel, who withdrew citing illness. That move helped save the television show and advance the HBO relationship, the kind of good-will collateral that could pay off in a lot more than a shoe spree someday.

Viloria's achievement and skill factor into that equation. So do his ability to fluctuate between 108 and 112 pounds—his win over Ortiz was his first sub-flyweight pro bout—and the potential for significant showdowns at 108 pounds against Puerto Rico's Ivan Calderon and at 112 pounds against the winner of the Jorge Arce-Hussein Hussein rematch, which was scheduled to be on the October undercard of Diego Corrales-Jose Luis Castillo II.

"I think Brian is going to break through, I really do," said Gittelsohn, who has managed Viloria's entire pro career. "Whether it's on someone else's undercard or a *Boxing After Dark* card, I really think he is the guy who will bring the lighter weights into the television mainstream."

To that end, Viloria, 18-0 (12) with one no-contest, who had fought more than a year without promotional representation after splitting with his original promoter, Lou DiBella, signed with Top Rank in early-2005.

Arum signed the 24-year-old Viloria with hopes of steering him along a similar path to that traveled by Michael Carbajal in the 1990s. Carbajal's fights with Humberto "Chiquita" Gonzalez proved the smallest fighters could produce big revenue under ideal circumstances, though others found it difficult to follow their pioneering effort. As Ricardo Lopez learned

PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS/HBO

Members of Viloria's team rush to congratulate him following his sensational kayo of Ortiz. That's manager Gittelsohn in the suit, embracing Viloria from behind. The pair has weathered some tough times together, but kept the faith and have finally been rewarded for their diligence and commitment.

during a brilliant career filled with comparatively modest championship paydays, guys with 24-inch waists need almost unheard-of levels of ability, marketability, and promotion to strike it big.

Viloria may have some geographical cross-marketing advantages. A native of Waipahu, Hawaii, he fought in his home state three times in his first two years as a pro, though not at all since early-2003, and said he will be interested to see how people react when he fights there as champion. His parents are of Filipino heritage and that nation has adopted him too. And his residence in Studio City, California, a two-minute drive from Universal Studios, has built his West Coast base and granted entry into entertainment circles.

Arum said he is interested in testing Viloria's home market. But in the endeavor to get the fighter off deep undercards—the win over Ortiz was off-TV on the Manny Pacquiao-Hector Velazquez/Zahir Raheem-Erik Morales card—fighting several time zones outside the continental U.S., while less problematic going west than east, still presents some logistical obstacles.

"Michael Carbajal was always in this unique situation where television loved him, he came from a relatively large boxing market in Arizona, and we could always put a show in Arizona and get a big draw," Arum said. "I think Brian could be just as attractive for television. But with Brian, if you put major fights in Hawaii and the Philippines, you're running into time differences for U.S. television that could have an impact on the live gate. That's one of the challenges we've got to work out."

Working out challenges has been a constant in Viloria's career, starting with its delayed debut. He was the last 2000 U.S. Olympian to begin his pro career, in May 2001, and a broken right hand in that fight sidelined him 4½ more months.

There were too many cancellations to recall, an overall lack of willing opponents, promotional disagreements about the inactivity, and some frustration as fellow members of a ploddingly advanced Olympic class bypassed him.

His team stressed patience. Viloria, true to form, let reason carry the day. Ratings pressure would bring fruit to bear eventually. He waited and worked.

"As I was watching Jeff Lacy, as I was watching Jermain Taylor, I knew it was about to be my time," he said.

Then time halted a while, beginning late the night of May 28, 2005, after everyone had gone home from Staples Center. Viloria was displeased by his lackluster performance and puzzled that Contreras quit. Arum thought the fight was so dull that he may have made a mistake in signing Viloria. Gittelsohn was home, just beginning to reflect, when his telephone rang. It was about midnight when *Los Angeles Times* boxing writer Steve Springer called for a comment about Contreras' struggle for life.

"I was breathless," Gittelsohn said. "I couldn't believe it. I called Brian and told him what happened. He was stunned, of course. I told him this was a story we couldn't control, that the only thing we could do is pray for Ruben Contreras. And really, what better thing was there to do?"

That is exactly what Viloria and his father, Ben, did the next morning. They were rebuffed by hospital officials who told them a visit to the comatose, critically ill Contreras was out of the question. So they went directly to church.

The next day, a Monday, less than 48 hours after the fight, Viloria was back at Hollywood's Wild Card Gym, at the urging of all the principals in his boxing career—his father, Gittelsohn, and trainer Freddie Roach.

"We were all concerned how Brian would handle it," Roach said. "He's an extremely intelligent and sensitive person and he could rationalize what happened better than most people could. But he also knew how serious the situation was and questioned what role he had in it."

Viloria responded slowly in the gym. He had the biggest fight of his life scheduled against Ortiz, though those around him questioned whether he had lost some of the fight inside himself.

Then came news that doctors were beginning to take Contreras off the coma-inducing drugs. Contreras gradually emerged from the mental fog. In August, before he was discharged, Contreras conducted a press conference where he explained he felt something physically wrong during the fight and said, "God told me to stop." His attending surgeon, Dr. David Duarte, said if surgery had been delayed even a half-hour, Contreras probably would not have survived.

Contreras was allowed to return to Mexico. And after Viloria endured yet another professional tribulation—the postponement of his original July 30 fight date against Ortiz when the Lucia Rijker-Christy Martin main event was scrapped—Contreras accepted an invitation from Viloria to attend the rescheduled fight in September. During that months-long journey, Roach noticed

something else happening in the gym.

"Every time there was news that Contreras had improved, Brian's training improved too," he said.

As Viloria's outlook brightened, he recalled more of the good times along a tough journey. Like in 2003, when Philippines President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo visited the U.S., and several prominent Filipino-Americans and their guests were invited to a state dinner in her honor. Viloria took Gittelsohn. Angela Perez Baraquio, the 2001 Miss America from Hawaii, also was among the guests. Dinner ended, and guests adjourned to another room in the White House, where a full orchestra played, and Gittelsohn stole a dance with Perez Baraquio.

"I told Brian I've been very fortunate in my life, I've experienced some great and wonderful things," said Gittelsohn, a movie producer and former president of Marvel Comics. "But only through meeting him did I get to dance with Miss America in the White House."

Viloria's title dance with Ortiz explained quickly why so many smaller fighters avoided him. In the final seconds of the opening round, a tactical start came to an explosive finish when Ortiz left a lazy jab hanging and Viloria fired at the opening. Viloria remembers feeling the punch distribute itself evenly through his right shoulder. Ortiz, 24-5-1 (16), who was making his first defense and fighting outside Mexico for the first time, beat the count after the right hand blasted his chin, but careened backward and fell down again, prompting referee Raul Caiz Jr. to stop it at 2:59.

"The way he landed, and the way his head snapped and hit the floor, I remember thinking it would be difficult to recover from that kind of punch, and that if he did get up, it was going to be a long night for him," Viloria said.

The stunning conclusion came after a prefight surprise, literally as Viloria prepared to climb the stairs into the ring. As he ended his ring walk, Viloria heard Top Rank publicist Bill Caplan mention that Contreras had arrived and was seated at ringside.

When Viloria eyed Contreras, he burst toward his fellow fighter and broke into tears against Contreras' shoulder. It was the first time they had seen each other since the conclusion of their fight more than three months earlier.

"At that moment, walking to the ring, Brian wasn't focused on Ruben Contreras," Gittelsohn said. "He was concentrating on the moment. Then, just as Brian was about to enter the ring, Caplan mentioned that Ruben was at ringside. Brian jumped up on a chair to lean over a railing to hug him. Brian was absolutely in tears. I didn't know what to make of it, frankly. I didn't know how it would affect him once the bell rang."

It didn't take long to find out.

Viloria, Gittelsohn, and Arum pooled funds into a check, for an unspecified amount, which Viloria presented to Contreras after defeating Ortiz. They will always be part of each other's lives. Viloria suggested the experience even could have an impact on how long he remains in the sport.

"We entertain people through controlled violence," he said. "This sport is really dangerous. It isn't something you should do your whole life. I'm going to be smart in this game. This game can change your life for the worse if you don't handle it properly. I'm going to try to get out intact, invest some money, find out what else is out there for me. This shouldn't be the only thing in life for me."

At press time, Viloria had accepted an offer to participate in Pacquiao's victory parade in the Philippines, where Gittelsohn said several sponsorship and marketing offers had blossomed. In Hawaii, islanders celebrated their first title claimant since boxing's original "Hawaiian Punch," Jesus Salud, won the WBA 122-pound title in 1989.

And amid the bustle of metro Los Angeles, Viloria said he was "still grinning ear to ear" more than a week after his victory. While he found public reaction to his championship breakthrough sometimes curious, he also expressed conviction that his breakthrough inside the ring will lead to marketing and television breakthroughs rarely experienced beneath bantamweight.

"In our weight division, the reality is that there hasn't been the same level of public demand for our fights," Viloria said. "I think we have an opportunity to expose our division to the fans, let them see the skill level, and create a new public demand. Bob Arum did it already with Michael Carbajal. I think he can do it again." ■

David Mayo covers boxing for the Grand Rapids (Michigan) Press and is a regular contributor to this magazine.

Exclusive Book Excerpt

BOX LIKE THE PROS

By Joe Frazier and William Dettloff
PHOTOS BY WEBSTER RIDDICK

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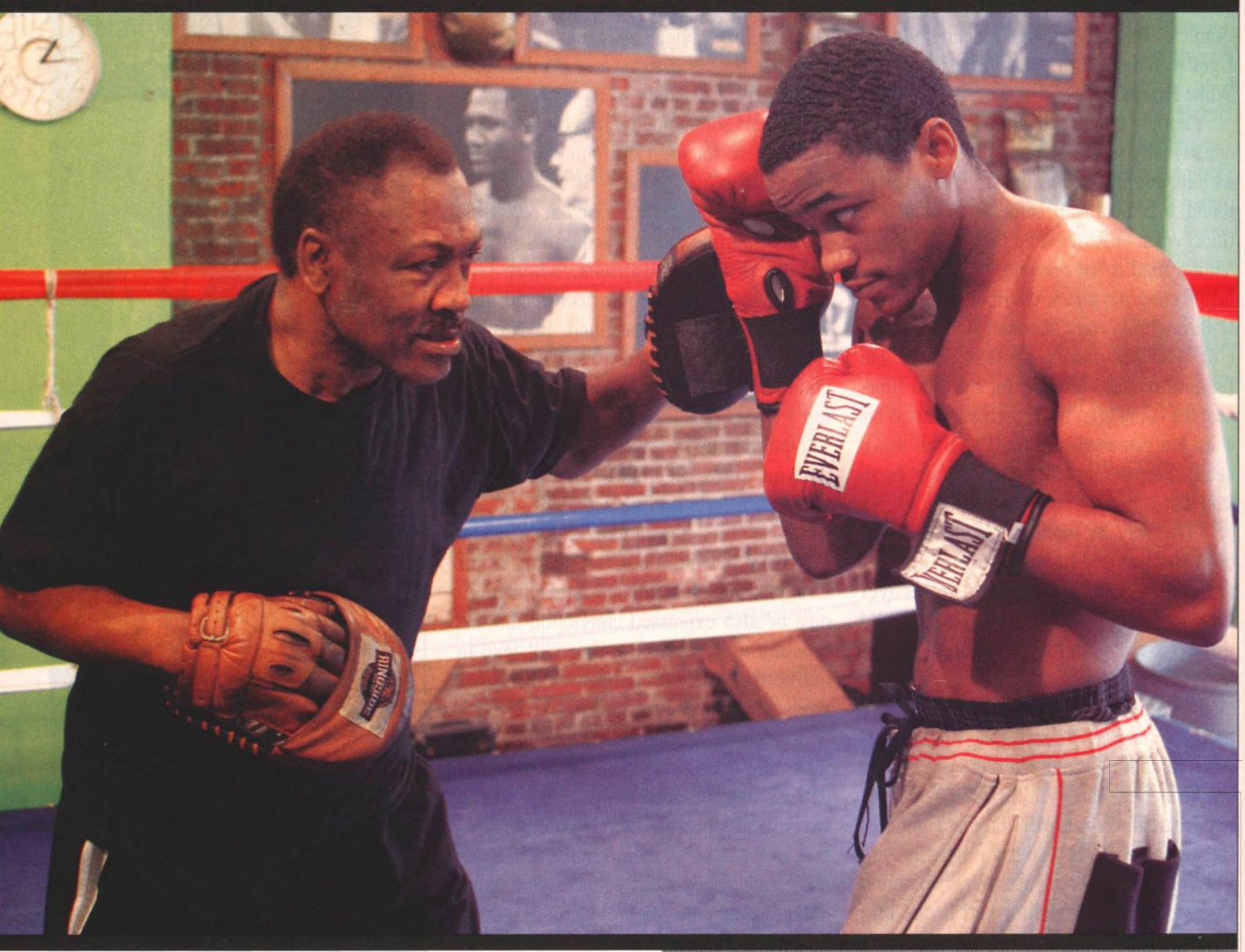
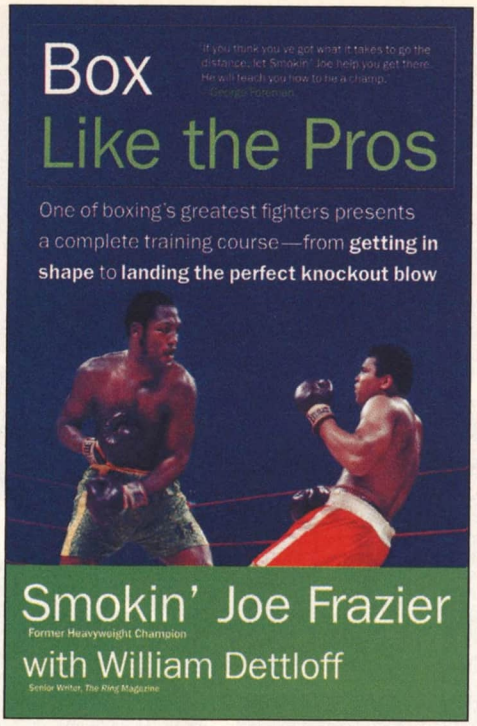




Your First Time Sparring: What to Expect

A lot of people come to my gym just to work out and get in shape, with no plans of getting in the ring. That's fine. There's no workout like a boxing workout. And for many of the people we train, that's enough. That's all they want. But for others, it's not enough. After a while they want something more. They figure they've gotten in shape. They've learned how to throw the jab and hook. They've learned how to move and duck and how to hit the bags and the hand pads. They want to find out what it's like to be in the ring with someone—for real.

I always can tell which ones it'll be: the ones who watch the sparring that's going on in the ring while they're jumping rope or loosening up, or even while working the heavybag. They want to get in there and try out the moves and punches they've learned. I'm not saying they want to be fighters—that's a whole different level of commitment. But they want to see what they can do in the ring. I can't blame them. After going through all the other training and getting into shape, why wouldn't they?

There are also people who come to the gym and from day one they want to be a prizefighter. And as soon as they get the moves down and we decide they're ready, they're going to spar. You can't be a fighter unless you get in the ring and find out for yourself what it's like in there. Maybe you'll decide then that you don't want to be a fighter. Maybe you'll want it more than you did before. Either way, you can't be a star unless you spar. It's a whole different world inside those ropes—a world you can't appreciate until you've been in there, catching and throwing punches.

Whether you want to be the heavyweight champion or just see what it's like to get in the ring, you're going to experience the same things the first time you're in there. And they're things you haven't experienced before. It's good to know about them beforehand so that you're not surprised when they happen. I'm not saying it's guaranteed that everyone will experience all of these things. Everyone's different. But chances are good you'll feel a couple of them, so it's good to know what they are ahead of time.

But first, know this: sparring is a learning exercise. Nobody, at least at the beginner's level, should be trying to knock anyone out in the gym. You're in there to learn. If the first time you spar you get the tar beat out of you, you're in the wrong gym. Go to a different one. Don't get me wrong—everyone's going to get hit. But if you really get beat up, it means the trainers aren't doing their job, which is to make sure everyone learns and that no one gets hurt. That aside, here's what you need to know and what to expect from your first sparring session.

You're going to get hit, but keep your hands up anyway.

1. YOU'RE GOING TO GET HIT

It seems obvious, but you need to know it, consciously, before you get in there and it happens. Most of the people you see on the street every day have never been hit in the face—not by a slap, not by a punch, not by a fist in a leather boxing glove. So be prepared for it. It might hurt and you might get a little dizzy, depending on how hard you're hit and where. Depending on your expectation, it's going to hurt a little more or a little less than you think. It doesn't matter. It's part of the game. Accept beforehand that it's going to happen and then forget about it. Your job is to hit the other guy and not let him hit you.

Some people panic the first time they get hit, especially if it's on the nose. Others—maybe you—will get mad or emotional. Maybe you'll lose your temper and want to hit back as quick as you can. That's all right. It shows you've got a fighter's instinct to get yours. But one of the keys to being a good fighter is controlling your emotions and remembering your technique. A lot of boxing is resisting what seems natural. No one's born knowing how to box. You learn it—every day in that gym. And what you do on the heavybag and on the hand pads and when you're shadowboxing is what you'll do in the ring.

So if, when you get hit, you want to rush your opponent and start swinging like crazy, like some kid on a playground, resist it. Don't do it. Slow yourself down. Force yourself to relax. Losing your temper and swinging wild only makes things worse. Stay calm. Remember your technique and do your job. Remember—you're in there to learn.

2. YOU'RE GOING TO BE NERVOUS

Most people feel nervous the first time they spar. You won't be the only one. It's natural. Fighters at the highest level in the sport get nervous before a fight, and even before sparring. Why? Even though it's just practice and no one should be trying to hurt anybody, it's still a fight—though it's at a slower pace because it's practice, and if you get stunned, there are plenty of people around to make sure you don't get hurt. But it's still you testing your skills, strength, and speed against the skills, strength, and speed of the fighter you're sparring with. Even though it's only practice, it's challenging and exciting. So you'll be anxious. And fear will make you do one of three things in the ring: run like a rabbit, freeze like a deer in the headlights, or make you fight.

If it helps, remember that you're wearing big headgear. And very big sparring gloves.

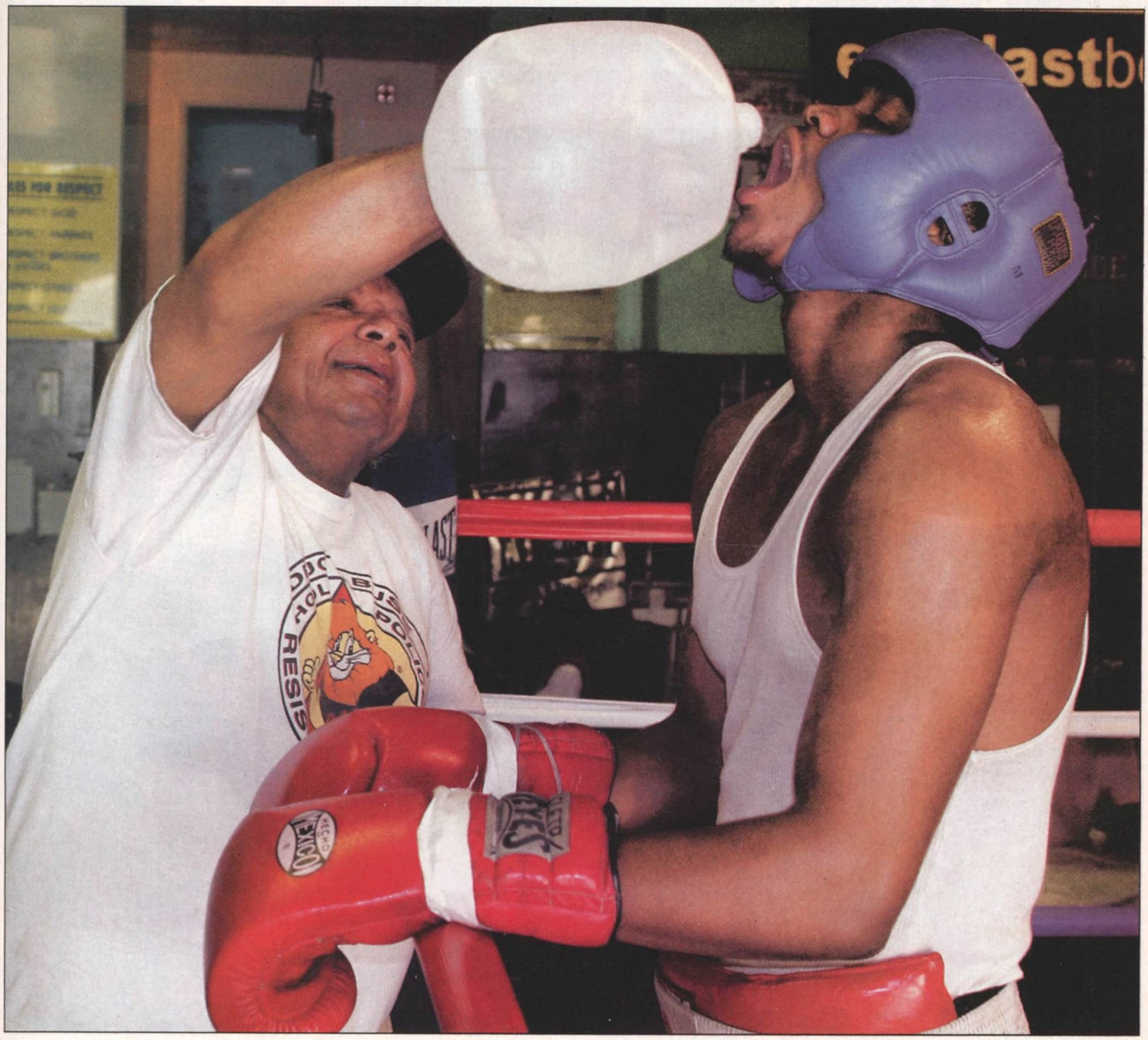
Between the headgear and the gloves, there's a lot of padding between you and your sparring partner's fist. That helps. It helps, too, to know that, just like in a real boxing match, that nervousness will dissipate, if not disappear altogether, the moment the bell rings. You'll be so caught up in what's happening between you and the other guy you won't have time to be nervous. So don't let the anxiety freak you out or keep you from sparring. Everybody gets it. It's normal, and even good for you—all that nervous energy is useful when you're in the ring.

3. YOU'RE GOING TO GET TIRED—VERY TIRED

You probably think that all the roadwork you've done and all the gym work, all the rounds you've put in on the hand pads and the medicine ball and everything else, all has gotten you in great shape. You're right—it has. But it hasn't gotten you in fighting shape. You will use muscles while you're sparring that you've never used in your life and won't ever use unless you're in the ring. It doesn't matter if you're running five miles a day and hitting the heavy-bag for 10 rounds. Sparring is altogether different. You will get tired, probably in the very first round. You'll get very tired.

It's not just the exertion of sparring that will exhaust you. If you're like most beginners, you'll be tight. Tense. And that is exhausting. One of the hardest things for many fighters to learn is to relax in the ring. It seems silly—why would you relax while you're fighting? But you have to if you're going to be good at it. Most young, inexperienced fighters get all worked up in the ring, and they're so tight and tense they can hardly throw a punch. And all that tension fatigues your muscles. The way to get the most out of all those rounds and miles you've put in getting yourself in shape is to make yourself relax in there. If you can't do that, you're not only fighting your opponent—you're fighting yourself, too.

Still, whether or not you relax, you're going to get tired. The good news is that the more you spar, the more you'll condition those muscles, and the more rounds you'll be able to go before you're exhausted. So don't think you've wasted all those rounds you've put in getting in shape. You didn't



Expect to get tired, because you will.

waste them. You had to put them in to get to this point. And this is where it gets fun.

4. THE PERSON YOU'RE SPARRING WITH IS GOING TO BE BETTER THAN YOU ARE

When you first start sparring, your trainer will decide who you spar with. Generally, it won't, and shouldn't, be someone who's got the same amount of experience as you. If the point of sparring is to learn, how will you learn from someone who knows about as much as you do? That's like trying to learn how to ride a bike from someone who's never done it. He or she will be making the same mistakes you are. That's why, in the beginning, and really throughout your boxing life, you should spar with fighters who are more experienced than you are. That's how you learn.

The danger is that the fighter you spar with will be so much better than you are that you might get hurt. And there are fighters out there who are like that. They don't care if you're there to learn or that you've never been in the ring before. They just like to beat up on people. That's where your trainer comes in. He or she knows the fighters in the gym and who to pair with novices (and who not to). Your trainer has a responsibility to make sure things work the way they're supposed to. If he or she doesn't, you know what to do—get out of there and go to a gym that's better for you.

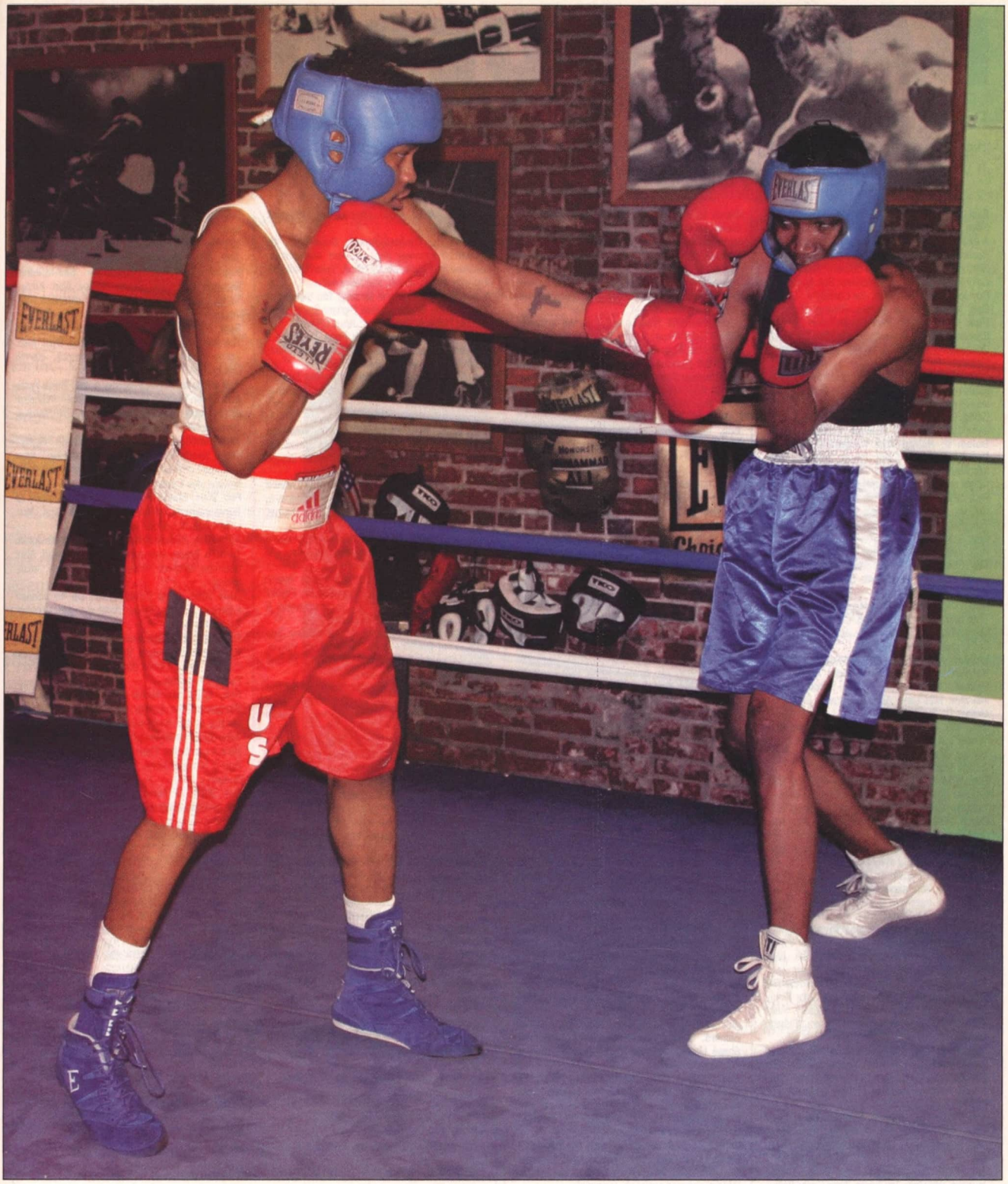
That aside, accept the fact that your sparring partner knows more than you do and will do things in there that sometimes make you look inexperienced and clumsy, which is what you'll be for a while. It's all part of the learning process. Maybe you'll get a bloody nose or a black eye. Big deal. Chances are he did, too, the first time he sparred. But he learned. So will you. Don't let his superiority discourage you. You can catch up. In fact, stay at it long enough and work hard enough and you're almost guaranteed to.

5. LANDING PUNCHES ISN'T AS EASY AS IT LOOKS

In the movies, landing punches is easy. Film fighters land more punches than they miss. But you'll find out the first time you spar, especially if you're sparring with someone who's got more experience than you do (which is who you should be sparring), that landing clean punches is a matter of speed, timing, balance, and positioning. If you've never been in the ring but watched lots of fights on television, it's easy to get the impression that you just get in there and throw punches. That's not the way it works.

You've never sparred before, so you won't know how to fully use your speed. You won't understand how timing works—you might be off-balance, and you won't

Sparring is where you learn. No one gets hurt or beat up.



Landing ain't as easy as it looks.

know yet really how to position yourself to land clean punches. So your punches will be blocked. They'll be slipped or ducked. If you telegraph them, your sparring partner will beat you to the punch, so you don't telegraph the next one. Odds are high that you'll miss many more punches than you land, and you'll find out, too, that missing makes you tired—more tired than landing does.

Don't get discouraged. You'll land a few punches. When you do, you'll realize how fun it is and you'll want to do it again. Sparring is hard work, and sometimes it's painful. But once you do it you'll want to do it more. And then you'll want to work harder on the fundamentals on the heavybag and on the hand pads and the speedbag and when you're shadowboxing so that you can do better next time. That's what it's all about. You get in there and learn to do your job. The gym is the school, and that ring is your classroom. ■

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Nov. 2003: De La Hoya-Mosley II: Will Three Years And Seven Pounds Make A Difference? Interview: James Toney. Also: Michael Watson, Erik Morales, Jones-Holyfield head-to-head.

Winter 2003: *KO* Interview Arturo Gatti: "Kostya Tszyu Needs Me More Than I Need Him." Also: Mayorga-Forrest II, Zab Judah, Corrales-Casamayor preview, Joe Calzaghe.

Feb. 2004: Shane Mosley: A Second Chance At Superstardom. Interview: Bernard Hopkins. Also: Laila Ali, Scott LeDoux, retirement.

April 2004: Human After All: Tarver Makes Jones Turn To Tyson. Interview: Emanuel Steward. Also: Sharmba Mitchell, Toney-McCline preview, trash-talking.

June 2004: What Could Tyson Do To Jones? Interview: Antonio Tarver. Also: Bernard Hopkins, Spinks-Mayorga.

Oct. 2004: Dr. Klitschko: The Perfect Band-Aid For The Heavyweight Division. Interview: Diego Corrales. Also: Monte Barrett, Cory Spinks, Vinny Paz & Sven Ottke.

Feb. 2005: Exclusive KO Interview—Manny Pacquiao. Also: Kostya Tszyu, Manning Galloway, quitting, perfect heavyweight.

June 2005: Heavyweight Champ Vitali Klitschko: He's A Lot Better Than You Think! Interview: John Ruiz & Norman Stone. Also: Glen Johnson, 2004 in review.

Oct. 2005: El Feroz With A Twist: Re-tooled Vargas Gets Defensive. Interview: Zab Judah. Also: Marco Antonio Barrera, Jean-Marc Mormeck, Julio Cesar Chavez Jr., *KO* at 25.

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New Face

(Continued from page 22)

eign fighters with gaudy records compiled outside of the U.S.," Maxboxing.com's Thomas Gerbasi wrote following the Medina massacre. "But with three out of his last five wins coming here, there can be little doubt that Julio is the real deal. And if he rises to the heights of the welterweight division, I can say, 'I remember when …'"

After Julio blew out Henry, ESPN.com boxing writer Dan Rafael dubbed him a "terrific, young, and exciting prospect." He also reported that HBO color analyst Larry Merchant called Julio the best prospect to emerge since Miguel Cotto. "Get on the bandwagon now or risk being left behind," Rafael wrote.

A muscular 5'7½" powerpuncher who turned pro at age 16, Julio sports a pair of quick hands and some nice defensive reflexes. That cocktail of speed and power, blended with an aggressive mindset, makes for a crowd-pleasing style. He overwhelms opponents with crisp combinations rather than seeking the one-punch finisher, and he diligently works the body to set up big blows upstairs.

Henry found that out early. The 6' Barbados native had opened up by moving in reverse, with his longer jab keeping Julio away. But Julio went to the body midway through round one to set up his first bomb of the night, a right to the jaw that staggered the 32-year-old. That shot led to three straight three-punch combos that shook Henry and put the crowd securely behind the Colombian.

Twenty seconds into the second round, Julio used his jab to set up a right to the head that resulted in a flash knockdown. Though he leapt onto the turnbuckle and posed as Henry got up, Julio conserved his energy by patiently dismantling his opponent throughout the remainder of the round. With 30 seconds remaining, he fired a jab-right hook-left hook combo that sent Henry to the floor a second time.

Henry gamely rose and made it through the round. He was more aggressive in the third, when he caught Julio with a nice jab and then a short left hook to the body off the ropes in the opening seconds. But Julio regained command in the final minute with a hard right hand over a slow jab that drove Henry into the ropes. Julio finished the round with several more rights upstairs.

With 35 seconds to go in the fourth, Julio caught Henry with a counter left hook to the side of the head. Dazed, Henry stumbled backward into the ropes, where Julio unleashed a 19-punch flurry. The 18th shot, a right hook to the jaw, put Henry down for the third time. He got up at nine, but referee Gerald Scott waved it off at the 2:49 mark.

Julio's relentless assault on Henry's body led to five warnings for low blows. The fifth, at 1:38 of the fourth, prompted Henry to take a knee, and Scott gave him time to recover. That didn't sit well with the crowd, which chanted "a-hole" as the action resumed.

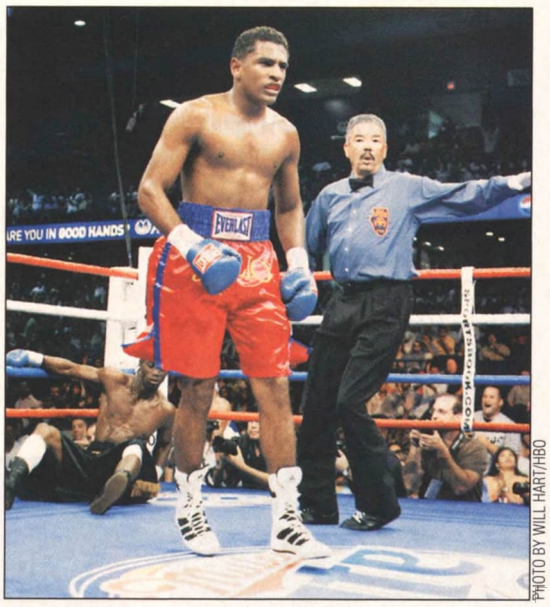

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Referee Gerald Scott sends Julio to a neutral corner after the undefeated junior middleweight floored Chris Henry for the final time. It was the Colombian's fourth win in the United States and his 24th overall since turning pro in April 2001 at the age of 16.

"Here's a Colombian in the middle of Chicago that had the fans in love with him because of his performance," Moretti said. "And the HBO executives loved him, more importantly."

Luis Barragan, director of sports programming for HBO, said he was impressed with Julio's hand speed and poise. He envisions him appearing on the network's *Boxing After Dark* series after a few more fights against better opponents.

"For somebody to be that young, the way he handles himself in the ring is impressive," Barragan said. "He just moves well. That's why we'd like to see him against better opposition. We'll be able to better gauge him when he's in against someone with better hand speed."

The biggest name Julio has been in against to date has been Vilches, a veteran of 50 pro bouts when he stepped in against Julio on April 8. Vilches, 43-5-2 (25) at the time, had gone the full 12 with Ricky Hatton the previous June. But Julio needed just three rounds to post an impressive stoppage of the Argentinean, who spent two months preparing for the fight.

"He fought Ricky Hatton and he fought Sharmba Mitchell. He said nobody in his entire career hit him as hard as this kid," said Sampson Lewkowicz, who represents Vilches in the United States. "It was a combination of punches. He had an unbelievable right hook to the body that damaged him. He was very, very strong. From the first round he was getting to him with the big punches. He even hurt him when he hit him in the arms."

Moretti said Julio will fight once more in 2005, possibly on the Hatton-Carlos Maussa undercard, if that bout comes together (Maussa and Julio both hail from the boxing-rich Cordoba region of Colombia). Plan B is a fight in Florida on Telemundo. In the meantime, Julio will work with Buddy McGirt in Vero Beach when he's training in the States.

Moretti feels that Julio will be ready for a shot at an alphabet title within a year-and-a-half. He hopes to get Julio to that level by pitting him against the David Estrada, Miguel Figueroa, and Oscar Diaz-types of the division.

"When you have a young prospect, you don't want to rush him," Moretti said. "If we can be patient, that would be ideal. By the same token, you don't have to be that patient, because he has that speed and power. He really puts punches together. He's an excellent bodypuncher.

"He's 24-0, but that's a Colombian 24-0. He's only had five or six fights in the United States. So I equate that to 12-0, or something in that range. That being said, he's clearly a guy with a lot of potential because of his offense and his style and everything that goes with it." ■

Don Stewart covers boxing for the Reading (Pennsylvania) Eagle and is a regular contributor to this magazine.

SUMMARY

HEAVYWEIGHTS

Ray Austin W 12 Owen Beck
Eddie Chambers W 12 Robert Hawkins
Carl Baker W 10 Luke Simpkin
Terry Smith W 10 Julius Long
Donnell Holmes KO 8 Stacy Frazier

CRUISERWEIGHTS

Guillermo Jones KO 4 Wayne Braithwaite
Steve Cunningham W 12 Kelvin Davis
Marco Huck W 10 Rudiger May
Sam Hill KO 3 Tyler Hughes
Don Diego Poeder KO 1 John Keaton

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS

Clinton Woods W 12 Julio Gonzalez
(Retains IBF Title)
Manny Siaca KO 2 Tony Menefee
Anthony Mundine KO 6 Rashid Matumla
Kai Kurzawa KO 5 Antonio Quincanga
Corey Cummings KO 10 Tim Bowe
Otis Griffin W 8 Roberto Baro
Mike Wood W 8 Jesse Bryan

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Markus Beyer W 12 Omar Sheika
(Retains WBC Title)
Joe Calzaghe W 12 Evans Ashira
Nestor Casanova W 12
Miguel Angel Arroyo
Daniel Lovett KO 6 Joel Burke

MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Danny Smith KO 5 Donvill Hendrix
Randy Griffin D 12 James Obede Toney
Najim Ettouhlali KO 2 Hans Janssen
Gary Lockett KO 2 Allan Gray
Tetsuya Suzuki KO 5 Petch Chuwatana

PHOTO BY FRIEDEMANN VOGEL/GETTY IMAGES

Welterweight Maxim Nesterenko plows a right into Oktay Urkal

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Vincent Vuma W 12 William Gare
Javier Mamani KO 2 Jairo Siris
Shinsuke Matsumoto D 10 Yuki Nonaka

WELTERWEIGHTS

Oktay Urkal W 12 Maxim Nesterenko
Raul Balbi W 10 Guillermo De Jesus Paz
Chad Bennett KO 5
Plaisakda Singwangcha
Tony Doherty W 10 Taz Jones
Vyacheslav Senchenko KO 2
Arthur Nowak
Anton Solopov KO 1 Felipe Santana
Sergey Sorokin KO 7 Pavel Melnikov
Daigoro Yamamoto Tech. Draw 1
Dindo Castanares
Eleazar Contreras Jr. KO 1
Alfonso Sanchez
Alex Francisco Velardez W 6
Vincent Garcia
Matthew Hatton KO 4 Dmitry Yanushevich
Luis Fernando Uribe KO 2 Alberto Silva
Nobuhiro Kumagai KO 3
Richdetch Vor Surapol

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS

Samuel Malinga W 12 Alvin Mohonisi
Mike Arnaoutis W 10 Marteze Logan
Takehiko Toki KO 1
Mangkongton Por Songkram
Nikita Zaytsev KO 4 Pascal Bruno
Lamont Peterson W 8 Ron Frankel
Amir Khan W 4 Baz Carey

LIGHTWEIGHTS

Zahir Raheem W 12 Erik Morales
Andrei Kudriavtsev W 12 Mikaitai Mutu
Manuel Medina KO 5
Miguel Angel Galindo
Daniel Jimenez KO 5 Felix St. Kitts
Jonathan Thaxton KO 4 Vasile Dragomir
Daisuke Hata W 8 Eiji Sato
Steve Upsher KO 2 Ricardo Rosas

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS

Manny Pacquiao KO 6 Hector Velazquez
Janos Nagy W 12 Tontcho Tontchev
Joel Cerrud KO 1 Alfaro Gonzalez
Antonio Cermeno KO 1 Raul Barrios
Victor Hugo Paz D 6 Gaston Sellan

FEATHERWEIGHTS

Sandro Marcos KO 2 Johnny Tapia
Joan Guzman W 12 Terdsak Jandaeng
Edelson Martins KO 2
Lindomar De Souza
Yusuke Uehara KO 7 Isao Harada
Juan Ramon Cruz KO 2 Rey Morales

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS

Tim Austin KO 5 Reynaldo Hurtado
Ratanachai Sor Vorapin W 10
Pedro Malco
Alejandro Hernandez W 10
Zacarias Chan
Steven Luevano W 12 Ruben Estanislao
Nobuto Ikehara W 10 Roberto Dalisay
Giovanni Andrade KO 4
Sergio Gustavo Rodriguez
Antonio Meza KO 5 Roman Campos
Al Seeger KO 8 Cesar Figueroa
Yuki Sakamoto Tech. Draw 3
Shinichiro Yamaguchi

BANTAMWEIGHTS

Jhonny Gonzalez KO 3 William Gonzalez
Gabriel Elizondo W 10 Benjamin Garcia
Alejandro Valdez KO 4 Adalberto Davila
Ali Rochmad KO 5 Nathan Sting
Bettina Csabi W 10 Zarrika Fatuma
Kenbun Torres KO 4 Takuro Matsubara

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS

Junichi Ebisuoka KO 8
Pichitnoi Sitbangprachan
Jose Navarro KO 5 Juan Keb Baas
Dimitri Kirilov W 12 Reynaldo Lopez
Pramuansak Posuwan KO 2 Jun Pader

FLYWEIGHTS

Jojo Bardon KO 7 Yasuyuki Kodama
Manuel Vargas KO 1 Diego Hernandez
Jean Piero Perez KO 3 Donaldo Mullett
Ricardo Ariel Toledo KO 5
Carlos Pramacio Villagran

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS

Brian Viloria KO 1 Eric Ortiz
(*Wins WBC Title*)
Freddy Beleño W 10 Rafael Tirado

STRAWWEIGHTS

Juan Landaeta KO 1 Diego Tirado
Wilfrido Perez W 12 Alfonso De La Hoz

BOXING EQUIPMENT
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The RING

FIGHTER *of the* MONTH

It's been nine years since Zahir Raheem represented his country at the Olympics in Atlanta. Nine years of frustration, of waiting for his opportunity, of watching his teammates—David Reid, Floyd Mayweather, Fernando Vargas, Eric Morel, Antonio Tarver—reach great heights while he puttered along in fights nobody cared about.

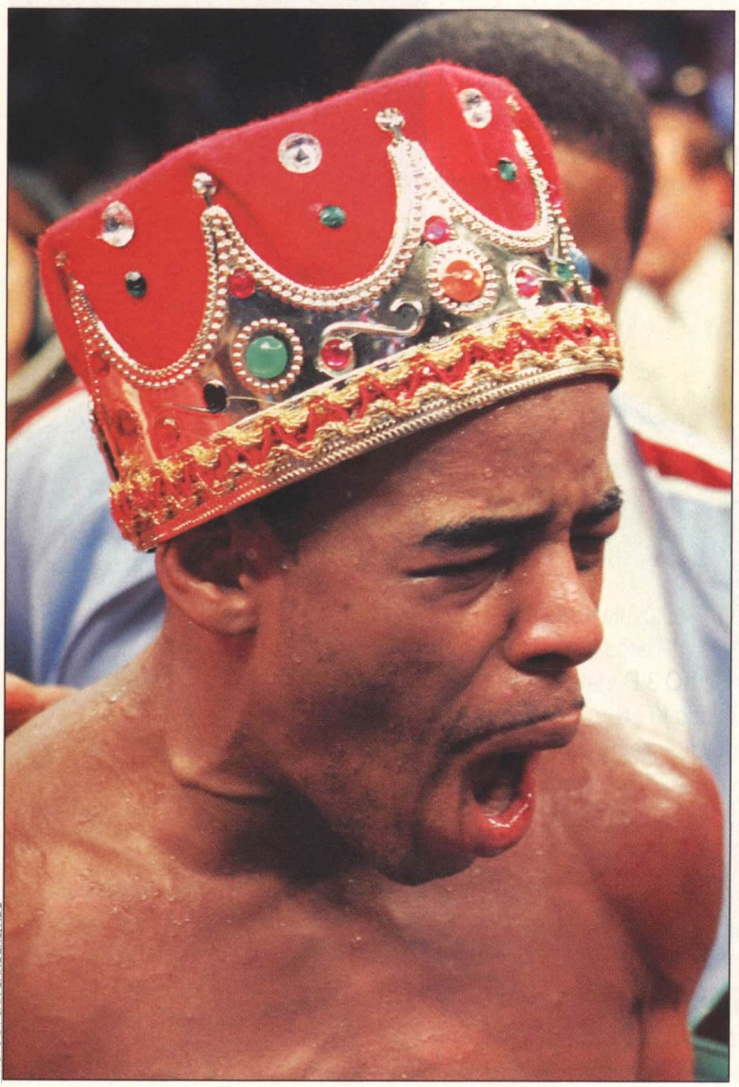


PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS/HBO

But you couldn't say nobody cared about Raheem's September bout in Los Angeles against Erik Morales. Not only was Morales a pound-for-pounder and a three-division former titleholder, but the Raheem fight was broadcast on HBO to set up a major pay-per-view rematch with Manny Pacquiao. Raheem may not have been the reason anyone cared about this fight, but they cared about it just the same. And Raheem took advantage with by far the best performance of his career, a win so important and impressive that it virtually erased nine years of underachievement instantly.

Raheem was too quick and too slick for "El Terrible." When the Philadelphian won the first three rounds, it was reasonable to presume Morales was just off to a slow start. By the time Raheem dominated the fifth, it had become clear that an upset was in the air. And once the bell ending the 12th round had sounded, there was no question about it: Raheem had beaten one of the truly great fighters of this era. And Mayweather, Tarver, and the rest of the team have some more company now when it comes to 1996 Olympians who delivered on their promise.

• • • •

Zahir Raheem

RINGSIDE REPORTS

Joe Calzaghe W 12 Evans Ashira

Cardiff, Wales: British boxing's new sensation, Amir Khan, had led the way with an efficient four rounds against part-time engineer Baz Carey, but Calzaghe, for several years one of the standard-bearers of his profession, failed to follow the youngster in a similarly convincing way. In fact, this was one of the Welshman's worst nights in the ring, as a hand injury suffered in the third round against the stocky Ashira, 167, Denmark via Kenya, left him with no choice but to pull out of a proposed November 5 showdown against Jeff Lacy, the IBF super middleweight titleholder.

"Things were going great for the first two or three rounds, but I caught him on the top of the head with a couple of uppercuts and felt my left hand go," revealed the southpaw Calzaghe. "It got progressively worse, and after four rounds I couldn't throw the left at all. It's probably the worst hand injury I've had in my career, even worse than against Robin Reid. I think the fight with Jeff Lacy will probably still happen because I don't see where else he has to go. We are the two best super middleweights in the world and it was just frustrating that this injury happened. Nobody is more frustrated than me."

Frustration was uppermost among Lacy's emotions when news of Calzaghe's injury was relayed to him by Pat Sheehan of *The Sun* newspaper in London from ringside at the Cardiff International Arena.

"You're joking," Lacy began before accusing Calzaghe of trying "to worm his way out of fighting me." Promoter Frank Warren tried to offer an alternative date in February, but Gary Shaw, Lacy's promoter, blasted: "We don't need to make the fight."

It was a cruel blow to Calzaghe, 168, Newbridge, Wales, who has long yearned for a big fight against a marquee opponent. Lacy fits the bill perfectly. Ashira, who had previously boxed mostly at middleweight, his only loss coming against New Zealand's Maselino Masoe last year in Miami, seemed also to fit the bill, for he offered little real threat. The danger, of course, was that Calzaghe would damage his brittle hands, and so it passed after the WBO super middleweight titleholder almost blew away his challenger in the opening couple of rounds.

Calzaghe came out of his corner firing ripping punches with both hands, sending Ashira into a shell and threatening to overwhelm him. Several times the challenger was pinned against the ropes or in a corner, but the Welshman just could not put the decisive punches together to knock Ashira, 24-2 (13), off his feet.

The fight began to change dramatically in the fourth, as it became clear that Calzaghe was no longer able to even throw his left hand. Barely believing his good fortune, Ashira settled comfortably into survival mode. Calzaghe was hardly hit by a worthwhile punch. But he was impotent himself, unable to do anything more than keep his challenger on the end of his right hand for round after round until the end of the fight.

The decision was unanimous. Renato Caddeo scored the fight 120-107 (as did THE RING), while Henk Adriaansen and Paul Thomas had it 120-108.

Referee: Mark Nelson
Promoter: Sports Network
(9-10-05)
Brian Doogan

PHOTO BY JOHN GICHIGI/GETTY IMAGES

Calzaghe fires a healthy right hand at Ashira

Brian Viloria KO 1 Eric Ortiz

Los Angeles, California: The big question mark entering this fight at the Staples Center was the state of junior flyweight Viloria's mind. Had he recovered from the emotional trauma suffered when his previous opponent, Ruben Contreras of Mexico, was injured to the point of near-death? During their May contest, Contreras, feeling something was

PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS/HBO

Viloria trades with Ortiz

seriously wrong, quit in the sixth round and collapsed in his dressing room minutes later. He underwent emergency surgery for blood clots on the brain. Amazingly, Contreras beat the odds, emerged from his coma, and was making excellent progress physically and mentally. He attended this fight. But here was Viloria back again. Would he hold back and lose his fire?

Not a chance. Viloria said once he got in the ring he "didn't have time to think about" his previous bout. The 2000 Olympian proved again he's a rare breed—a 108-pounder with one-punch knockout power. Ortiz, 24-5-1 (16), was no sacrificial lamb, but a genuinely tough Mexican who had won the vacant WBC title in his previous fight.

Round one was fairly uneventful for the first 90 seconds or so, until Viloria, 108, staggered his opponent with a jab. Ortiz, 108, refusing to be pushed around, went toe to toe with his antagonist, who seemed to be hurting him with every punch. Ortiz, 28, finally went down from a huge Viloria right hand, beat the count, staggered, and collapsed to the canvas a second time. Referee Raul Caiz Jr. (USA) waved it off at 2:59, making Viloria the third member of his Olympic team to claim a major title.

A ringside observer likened the aggressive fury of Viloria, 18-0 (12) with 1 no-contest, to a young Mike Tyson. Promoter Bob Arum predicted Viloria, 24, a likable Hawaiian of Filipino ancestry, will become bigger than Michael Carbajal, the popular, hard-hitting junior flyweight who won plenty of fans in the '90s and once earned a million-dollar purse. Arum floated the idea of challenging Puerto Rican strawweight Ivan Calderon to a three-fight series.

Promoter: Top Rank

(9-10-05)

Ivan Goldman

Clinton Woods W 12 Julio Gonzalez

Sheffield, England: Woods selected as dangerous a foe as he possibly could for his first defense of the IBF belt, which he had won in March against American Rico Hoye. Gonzalez, 175, Huntington Beach, California via Guerrero Negro, Mexico, is a former titleholder himself, having inflicted the first defeat of long-time WBO titlist Dariusz Michalczewski's career. He was awkward, and in the early going looked likely to win the fight. But Woods, 174¾, Sheffield, England, dug in over the second half of the bout, banging in hard hooks behind a solid left jab, to claim a unanimous decision and the finest victory of his career, at the Hallam FM Arena.

"It wasn't the best I've boxed, but it was certainly the best win I've had and I'm glad I was able to get past him because he's the type of fighter who makes good fighters look bad," Woods said. "I felt I was in control over the second half of the fight, but he hit hard and I couldn't take anything for granted. If I had a pick now, I'd fight [Roy] Jones next, but I'll have to wait and see first how he does against Tarver."

Jones had been sounded out as a potential opponent for Woods, a clear indication that Woods has become a confident man late in his career (he was stopped by Jones in six rounds in September 2002 for the undisputed light heavyweight title). Of course, the money would have been sweet for a rematch with the fallen king of the division, but Jones opted to instead face Tarver for the third time.

Gonzalez, too, had lost to Jones, in 2001, by a wide decision, but no one questioned his heart after he rose from the canvas three times. Two years later he defeated Glen Johnson, whom Woods boxed to a draw in November 2003 before the Englishman lost the rematch in February 2004. Gonzalez secured a bout with Woods by beating Montell Griffin on a technical decision in May.

Against Woods, he tried to win through sheer aggression, but the sharper boxing was clearly executed by the Sheffield fighter. He countered the Mexican's looping rights with a short, hard right of his own and landed crisp combinations in the second round, punches that Gonzalez took with typical stoicism.

The challenger attacked to the body in the third, but Woods, 38-3-1 (23), maintained his composure and continued to outbox his opponent, firing a powerful right hook toward the end of the round. But Gonzalez willed himself into the fight in the fourth and fifth rounds, constantly driving forward, attempting to instill doubt into a fighter who could be forged from the same steel that was once the thriving industry in his

hometown. Woods' jab, however, was a pillar of reliability and although Gonzalez' strength won him several of the middle rounds, the superior boxing ability of the 33-year-old titleholder was always going to be decisive when it mattered, and so it proved as he swept the final few rounds. Gonzalez, 38-3 (23), who had been rumored to be struggling earlier in the week to make weight, looked drained well before the finish.

All three judges scored for Woods, Howard Foster by 117-111, Pat Russell, 116-112, and Roy Francis, 118-112. THE RING also scored for Woods, 116-112.

"It was an ugly fight perhaps, but his shots never hurt me once," said Woods. "I was all right after about the sixth round and I thought I won by four or five rounds. If I had a pick now, I would face Jones next."

Promoters: Robert Waterman and Dennis Hobson
(9-9-05)
Brian Doogan

Guillermo Jones KO 4 Wayne Braithwaite

Cleveland, Ohio: In a cruiserweight alphabet title eliminator, former junior middleweight title challenger Jones, 192½, scored an exciting but controversial fourth-round TKO over former WBC titleholder Braithwaite, 199, on a Showtime-televised card at the Gund Arena. In Jones' biggest fights, he's always had trouble winning over the judges, but he won over the referee in this one and handed Braithwaite his second consecutive defeat.

In the first round, Jones, 33, Colon, Panama, repeatedly connected with big right hands. He landed at will and was all over Braithwaite, 30, Brooklyn, New York, who showed a good chin but porous defense in barely surviving round one. Braithwaite began to land his jab in the second round and found a rhythm as Jones' offensive aggression was stifled. Braithwaite built on his solid second round and controlled round three, moving behind his jab and connecting with solid shots. Big bodyshots from the Brooklynite to Jones' lengthy midsection effectively slowed him down in the third.

But Jones woke back up in the fourth as he and Braithwaite immediately met in the middle of the ring and traded big shots. Jones seriously hurt Braithwaite with right hands, and "Big Truck" was driven to the ropes and had to hold on to the top rope with one hand to stay on his feet. Braithwaite tried to dodge punches while Jones threw a series of right hands, with some landing and some missing. Referee Jim Villers (USA) moved in close and urged Braithwaite to punch back. Braithwaite ignored the referee's plea and continued his unique version of the rope-a-dope, holding on to the top strand as he tried to avoid shots. Braithwaite was eating a fair amount of leather, but slipped the last two rights before Villers stopped the contest at 2:26 of the fourth round.

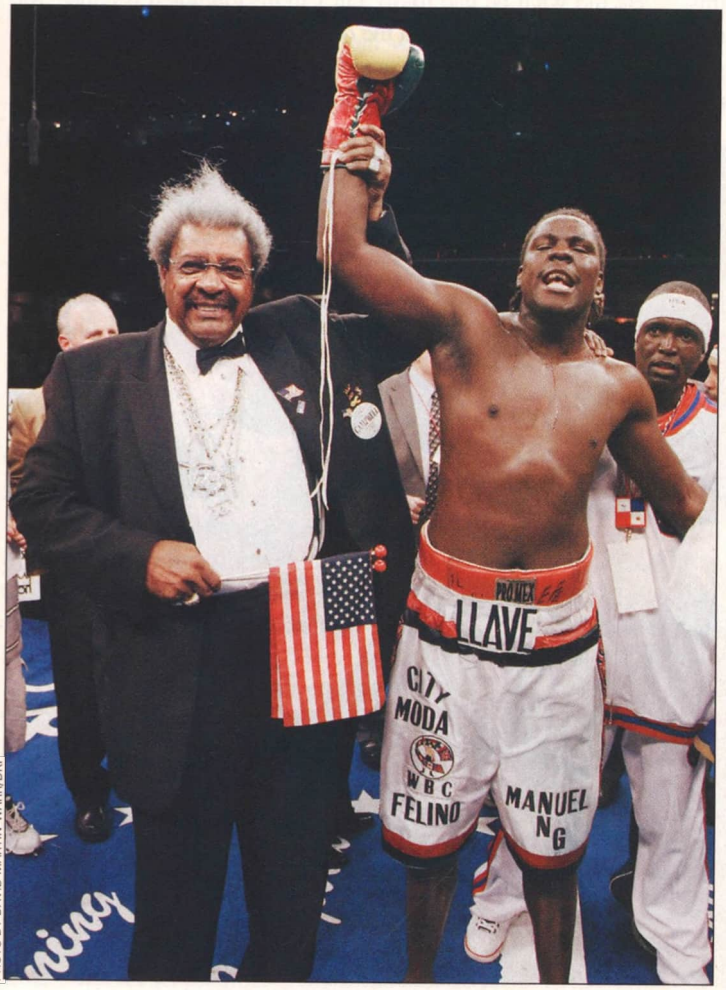


PHOTO BY DAVID MARTIN-WARR/DKP

Jones' arm is raised in victory by Don King

Braithwaite, 21-2 (17), complained bitterly about the stoppage, arguing with Villers as Jones, 33-3-2 (26), threw himself to the mat in pain with a foot injury. Villers' decision to stop the bout seemed a tad bit premature, but Braithwaite took an enormous amount of punishment in rounds one and four and did not punch back when trapped against the ropes under Jones' barrage of shots. "The Incredible Expanding Man" is now in position for a title shot against IBF titlist O'Neil Bell or world champion Jean-Marc Mormeck.

Promoter: Don King Productions
(9-3-05)
Yousef Faroniya

Vic Darchinyan KO 5 Jair Jimenez

Sydney, Australia: It just keeps getting easier for IBF flyweight titlist Darchinyan. He won the belt with a demanding 11th-round knockout of long-reigning beltholder Irene Pacheco, won his first defense via competitive eight-round stoppage over Mzukisi Sikali, and then, in his second defense, had it all his way in halting Jimenez in the fifth round. But before you presume that Darchinyan, 24-0 (19), is getting markedly better with every fight, take note of the fact that Jimenez had lost two straight coming into this one and really had no business in a title fight.

And it's not threatening to get much tougher for the southpaw titleholder anytime soon, as he has handpicked faded Damaen Kelly (who was blown out by Pacheco a few years back) as his next opponent, and even declared after disposing of Jimenez that he had no desire to defend

the title outside his homeland of Australia.

That will be just fine with the Darchinyan supporters who found their way to the Sydney Entertainment Center to watch the 29-year-old rout his Colombian challenger. Darchinyan, 112, was in control from the start, landing early and often with powershots to the head and body of Jimenez, 111½. In the fourth, a heavy left cross dropped Jimenez, 26, and though he got up inside Australian referee John Wright's count, he was on wobbly legs when the round ended. By 2:23 of the fifth, after a two-fisted attack staggered Jimenez, 22-5-1 (16), several more times, Wright called a halt to the mismatch.

Promoter: d-Rush Promotions

(8-24-05)

Markus Beyer W 12 Omar Sheika

Berlin, Germany: There was never even a hint of danger for Beyer, 167¼, Cologne, Germany, throughout the 12 rounds in which he outsmarted and outboxed perennial contender Sheika, 167¼, Paterson, New Jersey at the International Congress Center. The 34-year-old WBC super middleweight titleholder won as he pleased, controlling the action with his southpaw left cross and his all-around ring generalship, emphasizing yet again Sheika's status to be a notch below the best fighters at 168. It was Beyer's third defense of his third reign as the WBC 168-pound titlist.

Three times before, Sheika had lost to beltholders in this division: Joe Calzaghe, Eric Lucas, and Jeff Lacy. He also lost to British journeyman Tony Booth and twice to American fringe contender Scott Pemberton. It is only because he is an all-action brawler, who can take as much as he gives—witness his two fights with Pemberton, in particular—that the 28-year-old Sheika has continued to receive title challenges such as this one, but, yet again, the titleholder proved to be too good. Beyer did nothing extraordinarily well, but he did not need to. His supremacy was never seriously threatened from first bell to last.

In the opening round, he managed to inflict a cut just under Sheika's right eye that, despite being under the eye, still appeared to cause the challenger problems with his vision. Sheika, 26-8 (17), struggled to establish any rhythm and to land anything worthwhile. Unable to exploit his height and reach advantages, he tried to utilize his right uppercut in close, but it had negligible effect.

A solid left shook Sheika in round eight, but Beyer, 33-2 (12), was content to continue in the relaxed mode with which he was being successful. Had he pressed home his advantage at this point, he may have induced the referee, Massimo Barrovecchio of Italy, to take a closer look and possibly intervene, as Beyer's grip on the fight at this point was beyond dispute. But Sheika is a game fighter and he soldiered on, continuing to take hard left hands from the German favorite right to the end of the fight.

"I couldn't get my own punches off and that made it difficult to try to counteract what he was doing," Sheika admitted. "He did what he had to do, but I'm disappointed because, for me, this was a bad day at the office."

Two of the judges seemed generous in their appraisal of his work. Alfred Buqwana and Humbert Furgoni both scored

PHOTO BY JOHN GICHIGI/GETTY IMAGES

Beyer lands a right against Sheika

116-112, while Mark Green made it 118-110, all for Beyer. THE RING scored for Beyer by 117-111.

"I boxed well and I controlled the fight," said Beyer. "He's a good fighter and I'm delighted to get this win."

Promoter: Wilfried Sauerland

(9-3-05)

Brian Doogan

Roberto Vasquez KO 4 Jose Antonio Aguirre

Panama City, Panama: "Spider" Vasquez' first defense of the WBA light flyweight title didn't end as decisively as he would have liked, but the ending was still much better for him than it was for challenger Aguirre at Figali Convention Center. After former WBC strawweight king Aguirre scored a knockdown in the second round, he went on to suffer a nasty cut on his right eyelid in the fourth, leading to a controversial ruling, a blatant surrender, and, eventually, a formal protest of the outcome.

Vasquez, 108, Panama City, had looked sensational in defeating Beibis Mendoza for the vacant title four months earlier, but he got off to a rocky start here, hitting the canvas in round two. Aguirre, 107½, Tabasco, Mexico, was unable to press his advantage, however, and the 22-year-old titlist quickly worked his way back into the fight with a series of accurate combinations.

In the fourth, Aguirre, 30, was cut on the eyelid, and though he complained that the laceration was caused by a clash of heads, referee Joe Cortez (USA) ruled it to be the result of a punch. The ring doctor determined that Aguirre, 33-4-1 (20), was fit to continue, but the Mexican disagreed, withdrawing from the fight at 1:16 of the round. A few days later, Aguirre, having been TKO'd for the second consecutive fight, protested the loss and asked the WBA to grant him an immediate return with Vasquez, 20-1 (17).

(8-20-05)

O'Neil Bell KO 11 Sebastian Rothmann

Hollywood, Florida: When he won the IBF cruiserweight title, Bell needed to be saved by the judges. In his first defense, he was on his way to needing the judges to save him again—until he saved himself with a dramatic, spectacular knockout.

Through 10 rounds at the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino, Bell seemed hopelessly behind against hungry challenger Rothmann. Bell had suffered one knockdown and two point penalties and trailed 97-91 on THE RING's card. Somehow, two of the official judges had the fight even and the third had Rothmann up by just two points. But don't let those scores fool you and detract from the drama; Bell truly pulled one out of the fire when he suddenly iced Rothmann at 2:09 of the 11th round.

The first three rounds were close, with Bell, 200, Montego Bay, Jamaica, landing some decent bodyshots and fighting well in spurts while Rothmann, 194½, Pretoria, South Africa, via Tel Aviv, Israel, establish a stiff, long, disruptive jab and a right uppercut that couldn't miss. Bell was actually having his best round in the fourth until, just two seconds before the end of the round, Rothmann connected with a right hand to the chin, and the titleholder's legs betrayed him, sending him sprawling in his own corner at the bell.

PHOTO COURTESY REDLINE MEDIA GROUP

Bell finishes Rothmann with a right

Bell, 30, recovered nicely in the fifth, showing some bounce in his step, but allowed himself to be pinned on the ropes in the sixth and ate two heavy right hands at the end of the round. Though Rothmann's eyes were marking up a fair amount by the start of round seven, Bell had bigger problems, as referee Tommy Kimmons (USA), having warned "Supernova" three times already for low blows, finally took a point. The bout was turning into more and more of an exciting inside fight, but Bell was determined to go to the body and couldn't keep all of his punches up, losing another point in the ninth. Rothmann's jab carried the competitive 10th, and the fight was turning into what you might call a close blowout—neither fighter was dominating the other, but nearly all of the unofficial scorecards were widening.

Rothmann, 31, started the 11th well, using a triple jab and then a pair of right uppercuts. But with about a minute to go in the round, Bell threw a one-two, and the right hand caught Rothmann on the temple, sending him stumbling sideways into the ropes. As the South African righted himself, Bell connected with a straight, short right hand to his unprotected chin, and Rothmann, 18-4-2 (12), collapsed face-first, barely stirring during Kimmons' count. It looked all too similar to Rothmann's dramatic ninth-round kayo loss to Carl Thompson in February 2004.

For the vulnerable but victorious Bell, 25-1-1 (23), talk for his next fight is centering around Dale Brown—the man Bell defeated via highly controversial decision to claim the IBF title in May—or Guillermo Jones.

Television: Showtime Pay-Per-View

Promoters: Cedric Kushner Productions, Warriors Boxing

(8-26-05)

THE FIGHT DOCTOR

By Margaret Goodman, MD

THE TRUTH ABOUT ALTITUDE TRAINING AND BLOOD DOPING

Every world-class athlete searches for a strategy for success. We frequently hear of elite boxers like Oscar De La Hoya, Fernando Vargas, and Marco Antonio Barrera living and training in high altitudes like Big Bear, California, before a big fight to build their endurance. Is it worthwhile, and if so, under what circumstances? What about those who want the same result, but without the effort, so they cheat by blood doping? Besides being illegal, what are the risks?

ALTITUDE TRAINING

According to the Third Annual International Altitude-Training Symposium, held in Flagstaff, Arizona, in 2000, altitude exposure, combined with training near sea level (living high, training low), has been shown to enhance endurance performance when competing at sea level by increasing oxygen transport to muscles. This comes from a direct increase in the number of red blood cells in response to release of the hormone erythropoietin (EPO) during the first three weeks at altitude exposure.

EPO is a protein hormone secreted by the kidneys. Once released into the blood stream, it stimulates the production of red blood cells (erythrocytes). Red cells carry oxygen. Consequently, it is logical that having more red blood cells increases oxygen-carrying capacity, and results in an increase in stamina. Studies show that the athletic benefits of altitude acclimatization with low altitude training can take as long as six weeks. Once returning to sea level, EPO is suppressed and the red cell mass declines.

PHOTO BY BRENT COOK

Oscar De La Hoya trains at Big Bear, elevation 6,717 feet

Furthermore, nutritional requirements change at altitude. According to Dr. Barry Braun, assistant professor in the Department of Exercise Science, University of Massachusetts, the stress of altitude leaves less room for error in nutrition. Boxers and other athletes must be

more vigilant in nutrient intake. Immediate altitude exposure results in hypoxia (lowered oxygen reaching the tissues) and as a result this leads to appetite suppression and an increased metabolic rate.

Athletes tend to eat smaller meals and they lose weight. But when energy is insufficient, the body metabolizes protein. The larger the deficit, the more muscle is lost. Altitude living also increases nutritional need for B-vitamins and anti-oxidants (including Vitamin C and E).

Dr. Braun also mentions that athletes have a tendency to suffer dehydration living at altitude. So, boxers must maintain an increase intake of fluids, especially when training. According to Mackie Shilstone, exercise physiologist and boxing conditioning expert for fighters such as Roy Jones Jr., "The benefits of living high and training low have been established and make sense. However, there is individual variation. It makes more sense for the lighter-weight boxers. Heavyweights are at risk of over-training in such conditions. Boxers should also be in shape or the risks can outweigh the benefits."

However, living high and training high has not been shown to provide an advantage in performance. Therefore, boxers temporarily relocating to altitude training camps should consider coming to sea level for high intensity workouts.

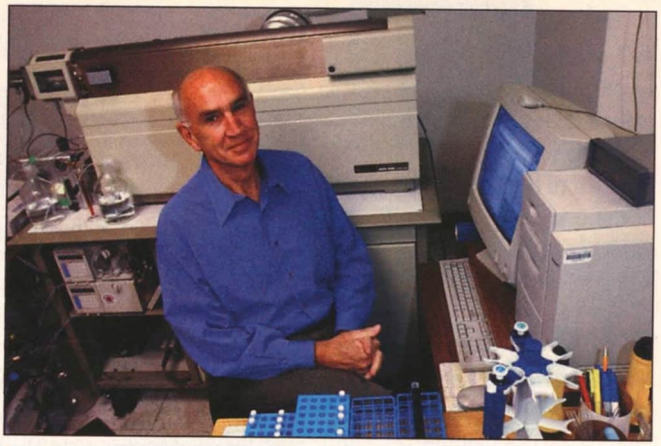
WHAT IS BLOOD DOPING?

Blood doping is a process that artificially increases the amount of red cells in the body in an attempt to improve athletic performance. Previously, this was only accomplished by transfusion. An athlete would remove a unit of blood. Three weeks later, right before a sporting event, when the body had replaced the blood loss, the same unit would be transfused back into his or her body. The extra unit of blood would improve performance in endurance sports because of the extra oxygen-carrying capacity. However, drug EPO avoids messy transfusions. The athlete can just shoot up to increase his or her red cell mass.

Blood doping, either through injecting EPO or transfusing blood, is dangerous because it can drastically increase blood viscosity (blood thickness). Besides red blood cells, whole blood contains water and protein. The hematocrit is the percentage of blood occupied by red blood cells. Normal hematocrit in a man is approximately 40-50 percent; in a woman it is 37-47 percent. There is no set value whereupon a high hematocrit is dangerous, but with dehydration, the level increases. A high hematocrit (above 50 percent) means the blood is thick. According to heart surgeon and Nevada ringside physician, Dr. Todd Chapman, "Blood is thicker than water, and if it gets too thick it can sludge up the tiny arteries in the heart, causing heart attacks. It is like bad motor oil that hasn't been changed in a million miles: It gums up the engine." The same applies to the brain's circulation.

EPO is also dangerous to athletes exercising over prolonged periods. The body can hold on to more water at rest. Your circulating blood can act as a reservoir. During demanding exercise, water is shifted out of the blood, the hematocrit rises, and the blood sludges.

Other risks can include sudden death during sleep. In fact, since synthetic EPO became available in 1987, it has been implicated in the deaths of over 25 world-class cyclists.



It's hard to catch EPO abusers, Dr. Catlin laments

HOW IS EPO DETECTED?

Until recently, detecting EPO abusers has been difficult because the drug is almost identical to the naturally occurring form in the body, and there are no exact normal ranges for EPO in the body. Cheating used to be curtailed by banning an athlete with a hematocrit above 50 percent, but then athletes attempted to stay just below this level to avoid detection.

Many will recall the 1998 Tour de France when several team physicians and personnel from many countries were caught with thousands of doses of EPO and other banned substances.

The creation of WADA (World Anti-Doping Agency) in 1999 has contributed to universal standards in doping control. They have implemented "year-round, no-notice testing." The International Olympic Committee also requires most athletes to be available for doing tests anytime, anywhere.

Now technology is catching up. In 2000, French scientists developed an accurate urine test able to detect the difference between synthetic and normal EPO. However, EPO detection remains difficult as testing requires interpretation. Director of the UCLA Olympic Analytical Laboratory Dr. Don H. Catlin still believes that abusers can often escape. Genetic engineering is also contributing to the challenge in performance enhancement. According to Theodore Friedman, director of the Program in Human Gene Therapy at UCSD, gene transfer methods to increase skeletal muscle and rebuild red cell mass means that genetic engineering can be employed to dope performance. In response, WADA has added methods of blood and gene doping to their list of prohibited substances, and blood tests are being developed to catch such individuals.

Is this part of boxing? Of course it is. Just a couple of weeks ago I called a boxing conditioning expert and asked if he had ever seen EPO in the gym. His response, "Sure, you wouldn't believe how available it is. You could get some today."

Drug testing on boxers is tedious, and now boxing authorities must accommodate for doping substances often similar to the body's own chemicals that can escape detection. To ignore the problem, and avoid testing and fighter education, not only removes a level playing field, but is in direct conflict to our main mission: improving safety standards. Once further perfected and the cost is reduced, boxers should be aware that EPO testing will soon become part of a typical drug screen. ■

COME OUT WRITING

Letters may be edited for reasons of space and clarity. Send your comments to Come Out Writing, The Ring, P.O. Box 1148, Fort Washington, PA 19034. Or e-mail letters to comeoutwriting@yahoo.com. E-mailed letters will include the writer's e-mail address unless a city and state of origin is provided.

THE ENDLESS DEBATE

Now that Mike Tyson's career has sputtered to an end, we can look back and ascertain that he never was that good to start with. The best fighter he ever beat was Razor Ruddock. The two best fighters of his era, Holyfield and Lewis, kicked his butt, and, in his prime, he got stopped by Buster Douglas.

Consider this: Going into the Douglas fight in 1990, with Tyson's record at 37-0 and the man seemingly invincible, if someone were to tell you that over the next 15 years he would only win another 13 fights, and against opposition like Peter McNeeley and Lou Savarese, you'd have told them they were crazy.

That turning sound you hear is Cus D'Amato in his grave.

BRAD MORRIS
Astoria, NY

Don Stradley asks this question "Is Tyson Hall Of Fame Bound?" in THE RING Double (Volume 5, 2005). Then he proceeds to dis Tyson.

Heck, yes, Mike Tyson belongs in the Hall of Fame. Regardless of what you think about Mike as a person, his boxing achievements still merit his induction into the Hall of Fame. I am sure there are many in the Hall of Fame who were far from exemplary citizens.

As far as Tyson's dirty tactics in the ring, this should also have no bearing on his induction. Once again, I'm sure there are many Hall of Famers who were dirty fighters. Besides, all of Mike's Hall of Fame accomplishments took place before he became a dirty fighter. Tyson did not have to resort to dirty tactics in his prime; he just beat everyone fair and square. He turned to illegal tactics out of frustration.

Mike dominated his era as much as any fighter has, maybe not as long as many, but it was still total dominance for four or five years. His hand speed, power, and fury during this time was a combination that should rank him among the best-ever heavyweights. It's not his fault there were not a lot of great fighters around to beat. Who did Marciano beat? Blown-up light heavyweights and those past their prime. Who did Dempsey beat? And Joe Louis? Tyson's prime compares equally to those.

AMY SCHULZ
Byrnes Mill, MO

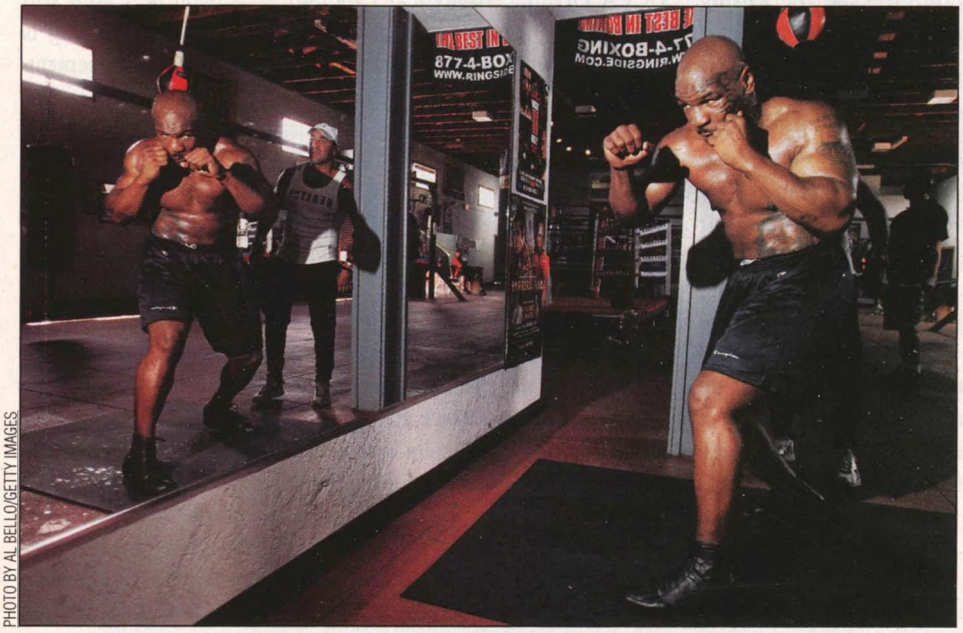


PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

Just how history will remember Mike Tyson is a matter of continual debate among boxing fans. Does he deserve to be remembered as an all-time great? Brad Morris votes no; Amy Schulz says yes.

VACANT OR SPLINTERED?

I would like to respond to Nigel Collins' editorial in THE RING Extra (December 2005). If Bernard Hopkins defeats Jermain Taylor in their rematch and then retires or moves up in weight, the middleweight title will be vacant, not splintered, as Collins suggests. I, as well as a lot of other readers of this magazine, view THE RING championship belt as the only title that matters in boxing. I yearn for the day when the alphabet organizations are disbanded and the rankings and titles are determined by THE RING and/or others who are committed to the betterment of this sport.

This will never happen if THE RING doesn't believe it can.

AARON BATTALINI
Economy, PA

[Editor's Note: The problem isn't that THE RING does not believe in its championship policy. It's simply that, so far, we see little evidence that the rest of the industry—promoters, managers, TV networks, the mainstream media, and, yes, even fighters—are ready to abandon a corrupt system. Despite the occasional howls of protest when things don't go their way, many seem to prefer a system that can be unfairly manipulated. THE RING has offered an alternative that has gained considerable support since its inception three years ago, but, sadly, things have yet to reach a point where the malevolent forces have relinquished their grip on the sport.]

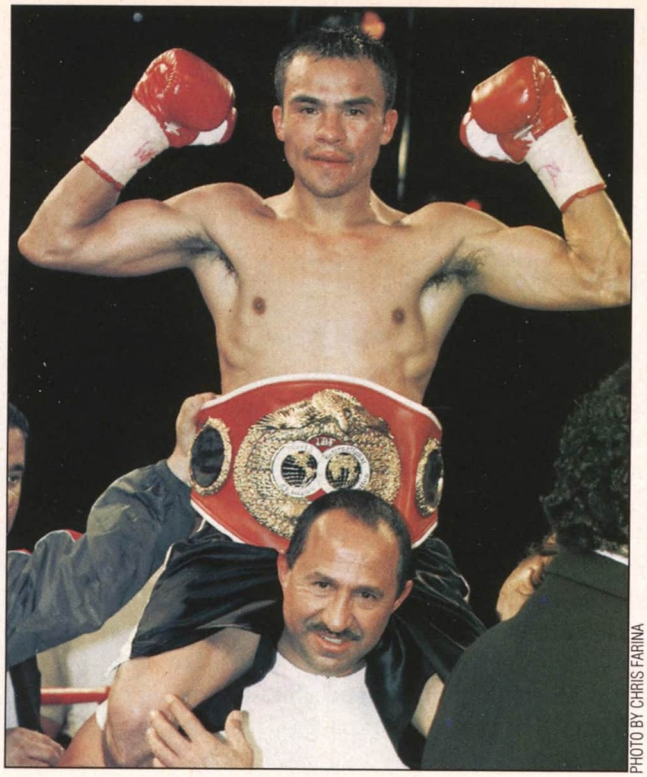


PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

The fact that Juan Manuel Marquez was not shortchanged in a recent article in THE RING pleases reader Joseph Carlo Russo. Russo believes the featherweights and junior lightweights represent boxing's best.

PRETTY BOY PRETTY NICE

I would just like to say that I don't think that Floyd Mayweather deserves the bad boy image that the media portrays. I had the pleasure of meeting Floyd in Las Vegas at a presentation of *Friday Night Fights*, and he was the nicest professional athlete I have ever met. He came and sat at our table, took pictures with us, and told us, in his words, "the secret to boxing." He also told us about his plan to move up to 140 pounds, which he announced later on the show.

That night has made me a fan for life. In a time when boxing is searching for new faces to help heal its tarnished image, I wish writers would focus more on stories like these rather than the negative ones. Thank you, Floyd! You made the night for a couple of 21-year-old kids from Canada!

GAELAN BEHIE
Vancouver, BC

130 ON THE MONEY

First, I would like to thank THE RING for its story "Following The Money: Why All The Top Featherweights Are Moving To 130" (October 2005). I found this article very insightful and entertaining, as it provided a thorough breakdown of what I feel is the best division in boxing.

The junior lightweight division exhibits a well-balanced and consistent formula of talent, entertainment, and marketing potential. As the four top dogs, Marco Antonio Barrera, Erik Morales, Manny Pacquiao, and Juan Manuel Marquez, have become regulars in THE RING'S pound-for-pound ratings, I feel that my claim for the junior lightweight division being the best in boxing is further solidified. You can mix and match any four of the junior lightweight's top thoroughbreds and it is almost a guarantee that you'll get a gem of a fight. In my opinion, it is these feather/junior lightweight fights that turn out to be the only ones worth ordering on pay-per-view.

I would also like to give THE RING two thumbs up on its equal coverage of Juan Manuel Marquez, because he is often unmentioned and a bit shortchanged in his stake to featherweight greatness.

JOSEPH CARLO RUSSO
Brooklyn, NY

ANONYMOUS NO LONGER

Who writes the comments for the "TV Fights Of The Month" page? Month after month it's always the funniest page in the magazine.

JOHN DAVIS
West Milford, NJ

[Editor's Note: That would be Senior Writer Bill Dettloff. We like them too.]

ANOTHER HOPKINS MAN

I've watched the Taylor-Hopkins fight twice, and there was nothing that happened that gave one boxer the edge at all. When Hopkins fights this kind of counter-intensive fight, he is virtually impossible to outpoint. It was bad to "give" Taylor the championship (one of the rare "real" RING-certified ones) in a fight like that. For Hopkins to lose the title that way was terrible.

FRANK GANNON
Demorest, GA

ESPN SHOULDN'T RATE

Here's a question I believe deserves an answer: How can ESPN rate fighters *and* promote PPV boxing events that feature boxers ESPN has in its ratings without creating a conflict of interest?

I enjoy ESPN2's *Friday Night Fights* and believe ESPN helps boxing more than it hurts the sport. But ESPN has opened Pandora's Box by offering its own ratings (provided by Dan Rafael). These ratings have already conflicted with THE RING'S ratings, which *Friday Night Fights* has always supported in the past.

The networks should provide the entertainment and allow THE RING ratings to cut a path through this alphabetical disaster. The last thing boxing needs is more confusion!

STEVE NALLEY
Newburgh, IN

[Editor's Note: We respect Rafael's ratings, though you are correct in pointing out the appearance of a conflict of interest. We, too, feel that it is counter-productive to add yet another set of ratings to the mix. Obviously, you and many others who have written to us feel strongly about the issue. We suggest you express your feelings directly to ESPN.] ■

LOOKING AHEAD

By Joe Santoliquito

WINKY: WHY WON'T ANYONE FIGHT ME?

PHOTO BY JED JACOBSOHN/GETTY IMAGES

Wright is looking for opponents again

Winky Wright finds himself playing the waiting game—again. It's an ongoing theme that's plagued the junior middleweight champion of the world throughout his career. And if you think about it for a second, it boggles the mind. In his last three fights, the crafty lefthander has beaten **Shane Mosley** twice and dominated **Felix Trinidad**, yet that open December 10 date HBO has designated for him stands with a question mark next to his name.

The names that were being discussed as of press time for this magazine were pretty interesting: **Felix Sturm**, **Ike Quartey**, and **Ricardo Mayorga**. But no one, it seems, really wants to fight the number-two rated pound-for-pound fighter in the world.

"We are trying to do something with Felix Sturm or Ike Quartey, someone like that," Wright confirmed. "We want to face someone with a name, someone who is credible. **Fernando Vargas** doesn't want any part of me now, and I don't want any part of him either. I'm in a position of power and the tables are turned. I went to him for years trying to get a rematch; now I don't want one. His people have to come to me now, and I want to teach people a lesson after what they've done to me for all of these years."

Asked if he could take a gimme fight and hold out for the winner of the **Jermain Taylor-Bernard Hopkins** rematch, Wright said. "I'm not holding out for the winner of Hopkins-Taylor. I want to fight the best, but the best don't want to fight me. Hopefully, one of these guys will want to step up and fight me. I think maybe I scared away a lot of people when I beat Trinidad. To shut out a fighter like Tito, it was a great win, but in a way, a bad win for me, because no one wants to step up and fight me now."

HBO has spoken to Wright about Sturm, Quartey, and Mayorga. But each time, it's been the stumbling block of "either they just don't want to fight me, or if they do want to fight, they're asking too much," Wright said. "But those three right now are on top of the list. I'll fight anybody. It's about fighting the best, because I've already fought the rest. I will get into the ring December 10 against somebody, because I'm ready to fight. Why won't anyone fight me? I don't know. Maybe it is still a lack of respect; it's a way for people to use this or that against me."

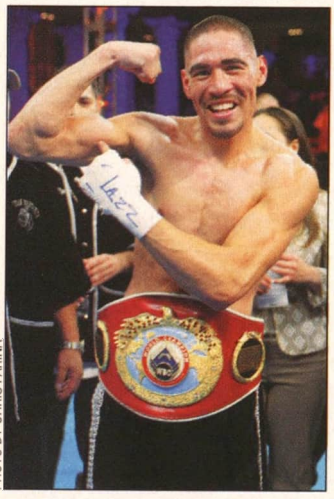


PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

Margarito is ready to flex his muscles again in November

LISTEN UP

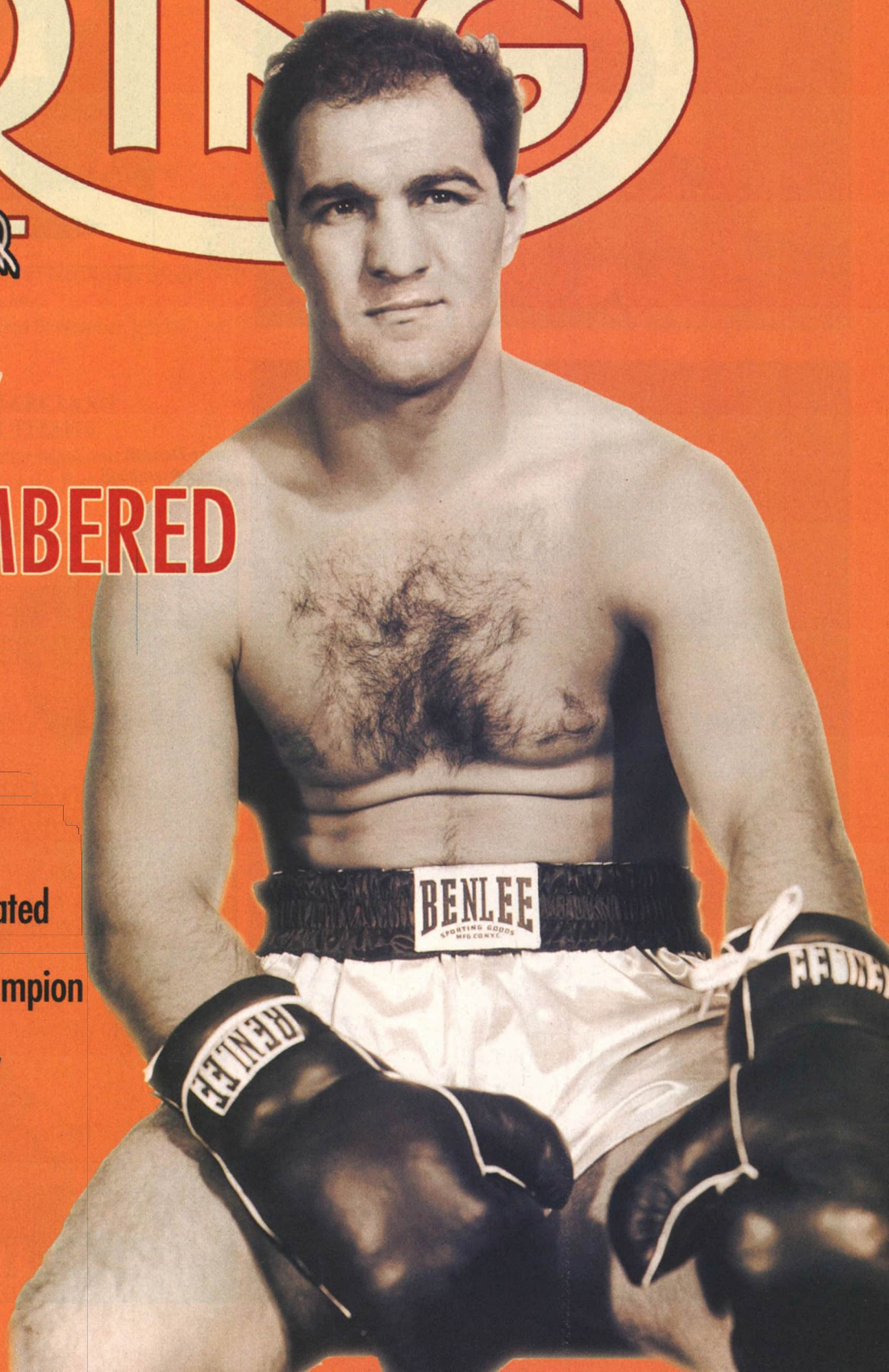
Antonio Margarito may be the welterweight equivalent of Winky Wright: a fighter with a ton of ability with whom no name fighter wants to tangle. In the meantime, Margarito, THE RING's number-one ranked welterweight contender, will keep busy by taking on rugged **Manuel Gomez** on November 12. Margarito-Gomez will be the semifinal bout supporting the main event, which will feature world heavyweight champion **Vitali Klitschko** vs. **Hasim Rahman**, in Las Vegas, at the Thomas and Mack Center, sponsored by Ceasars Palace and Wynn's Las Vegas. Gomez is 2-0-2 in his last four fights and, on paper, poses a miniscule threat to Margarito, 32-4 (23), who is coming off a five-round thumping of **Kermit Cintron**, back on April 23 … **Acelino Freitas** will make his first appearance in the United States since suffering his loss to **Diego Corrales** in August 2004. "Popo" will take a stay-busy fight against undefeated **Michael Katsidis** on November 19 in Mashantucket, Connecticut. Since losing to "Chico," Freitas owns two victories in his home country of Brazil … Australian super middleweight rivals **Anthony Mundine** and **Danny Green** will finally battle Down Under in a classic duel between perceived good guy (Green) vs. bad guy (Mundine), sometime between February and April '06. In the meantime, they'll have warm-up bouts on the same card on December 11 at Challenge Stadium in Perth … Talk has been raised of a possible matchup between **Humberto Soto**, **Rocky Juarez'** conqueror, and WBC featherweight titlist **Injin Chi** in December. ■

MAGAZINE WITHIN A MAGAZINE

The RING

ROCKY REMEMBERED

A Tribute To
The Only Undefeated
Heavyweight Champion
In Boxing History



The RING

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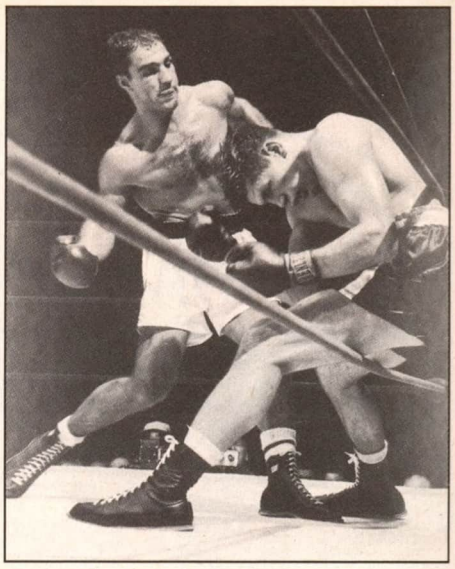

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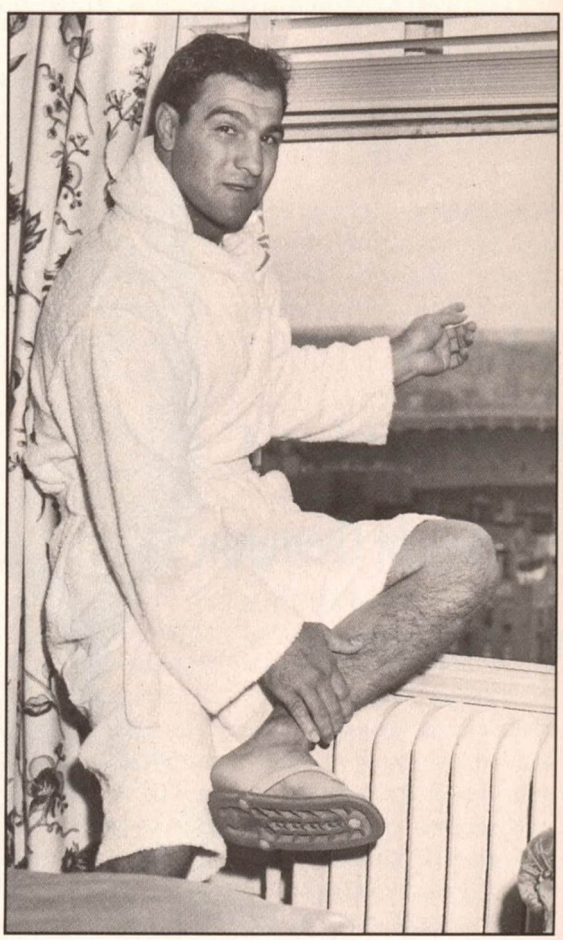

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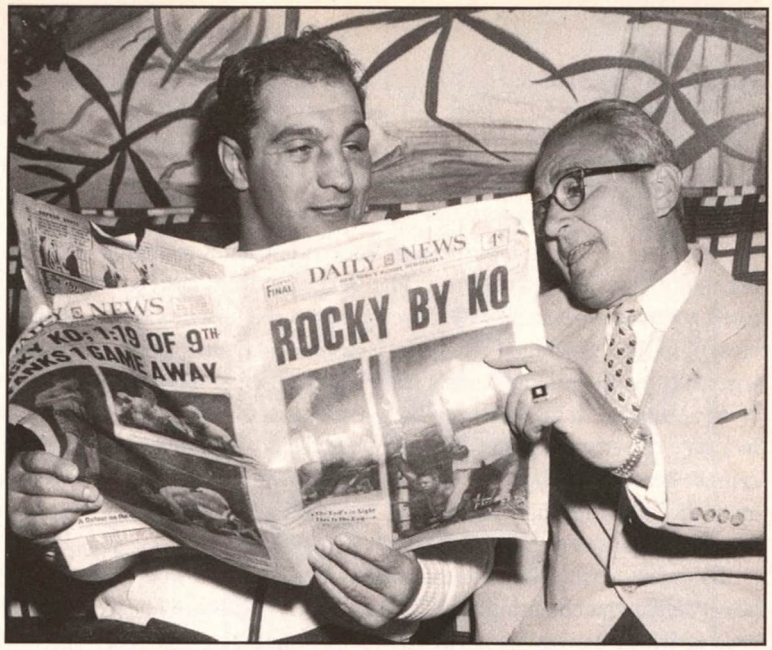
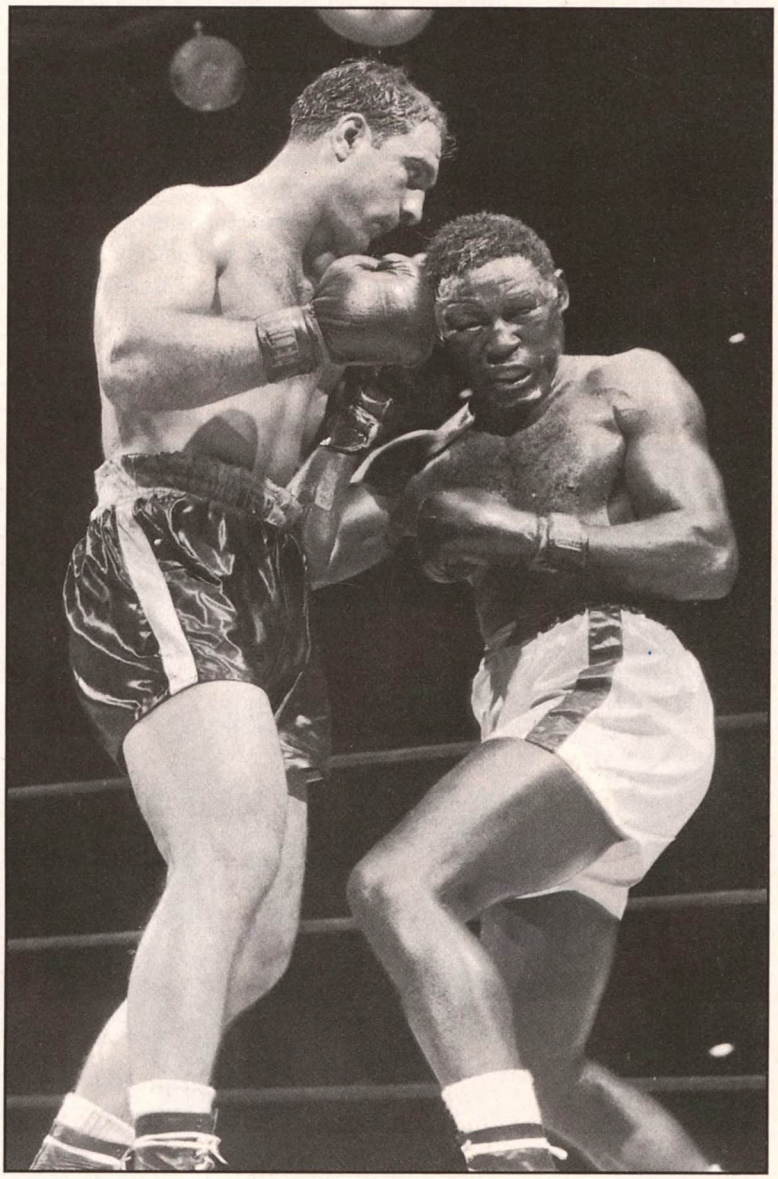
A Fight-by-Fight Listing Of Marciano's Professional Record





Editor's Note

It is a tribute to Rocky Marciano's enduring popularity that, 50 years after his final fight, THE RING has dedicated a 62-page magazine-within-a-magazine to his memory. For most of today's generation, Marciano is just one of numerous ring legends currently residing in what Nat Fleischer used to refer to as "Fistic Valhalla," a mystical realm where the gods of boxing exist in a state of perpetual grace. But the true home of ring immortals is in the hearts of boxing fans, and to the post-World War II generation that lived through Marciano's reign, he represents much more than a plaque on a wall in Canastota.

I was just a schoolboy in short pants when Marciano won the heavyweight championship in 1952, but clearly recall the reverence in which he was held. The first boxing magazine I bought had Rocky on the cover. Marciano was not only undefeated and undisputed, he looked and acted the part—an all-action slugger who overcame adversity with sheer willpower and a paralyzing punch. And when it was all over and he'd finished bludgeoning his opponents into an uncompromising and frequently gory defeat, he was self-effacing about his accomplishments and generous to his opponents. Just the way heroes are supposed to be.

We like to think back to the 1950s as a more innocent time, but it wasn't, not really. The horrors of World War II had quickly morphed into the horrors of the Korean conflict, segregation was still the law of the land south of the Mason-Dixon Line, and organized crime was solidly entrenched in the Sweet Science. But like his movie namesake of the mid-'70s, Rocky made people feel better about themselves, made them believe that a can-do attitude and hard work can make everything turn out right. They were fooling themselves, of course, but that's what hero worship is all about—deluding ourselves, albeit temporarily, into believing that the best among us can elevate us all through example.

Marciano filled the role to perfection, providing an uplifting storyline to the realities of day-to-day existence. The fact that he was far from an Adonis, athletically ungifted, and usually bled all over the ring made it even better. Rocky was, or at least seemed, simultaneously one of us but somehow better.

Not that Marciano set out to be any of these things. All he wanted to do was win fights and make money for him and his family. But the times and the man dovetailed together in a way that fit perfectly, helping to create a powerful illusion that still filters down through the years, casting a faint light on an era we look back on with tender nostalgia.

That Marciano is the only heavyweight champion to go undefeated throughout his career is the hook upon which his fame hangs. But even such a unique statistic doesn't explain why Rocky still resonates so strongly five decades after he threw his final competitive punch.

Marciano's true greatness is rooted in the magic that is created when an object of veneration fulfills expectations in the manner expected of a hero. Marciano did that as well as any champion before or since.

Nigel Collins
Editor-in-Chief

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ROCKY REMEMBERED

October 26, 1951

Rocky's Eighth Round Knockout Of Joe Closes One Of Ring's Most Lustrous Careers

LOUIS KO STARTS NEW ERA

By Nat Fleischer

Rocco Francis Marchegiano of Brockton, Massachusetts—Rocky Marciano to the fight fans—put an end to the long career of Joe Louis when he stopped him in 2:36 of the eighth of a scheduled 10-round fight in Madison Square Garden. The wallops that put Louis flat on his back, with head resting outside the ropes, restored stability to the heavyweight class.

The knockout, though it brought sadness to the thousands who had hoped it never would happen to Louis, went a long way toward returning heavyweight distinction to youth and putting an end to the stranglehold the veterans have had on boxing.

The wild commotion that followed Marciano's victory, the reams of copy that acclaimed his triumph, made Marciano the hottest thing around in boxing. His victory brought to the sport new life, new spirit, and new fans, as did Louis when he made his debut in New York on June 25, 1935, and whipped Primo Carnera in the sixth round.

When the former "Brown Bomber" became the 33rd victim in an unbroken string of 38 triumphs for Rocky, the Brockton aspirant to heavyweight honors automatically thrust himself into the forefront of challengers for a title shot.

Unfortunately, because Walcott is not a fighting champion but a 38-year-old veteran who prefers to rest on his laurels until next June, when he will tackle Ezzard Charles in a return engagement, Marciano will have to wait for his opportunity until at least next September.

No matter what Charles and Walcott may think about Marciano's skills, the winner of the title bout will have to consider Rocky as the legitimate challenger if either hopes to get into a big money shot.

There can be no doubt that Rocky is getting more than deserved acclaim for stopping the aged Louis, but the magic name of Louis was bound to bring such national attention to the man who finally brought Joe's great career to an end.

It wasn't the manner in which Rocky turned the trick that earned for him that praise. A crude powerhitter, Marciano had to wait until Joe began to tire. He couldn't halt Louis until the former Bomber, whose devastating blows would have put Rocky out of the picture in a few rounds when Louis was in his heyday, had shot his bolt, dropped his right, and left himself open for the hook that spelled his doom.

It was a left hook—something that Louis never worried about when in his prime—that set him up for the knockout in his old age.

Tale of the tape: The most significant stat was the 10-year age difference between Marciano and Louis. When Marciano turned pro in March 1947, Louis was still world champion, but by the time they fought, Louis had been an ex-champ for more than two years.

The legendary Louis winces as Marciano lands a right uppercut. The bout, held before a crowd of 17,241 at Madison Square Garden, was a classic changing-of-the-guard fight, with Marciano representing the new era of heavyweights.

It wasn't a new story in boxing. It was something that had to come sooner or later. In all of his fights since starting his comeback, Joe's admirers kept crossing their fingers every time he went to bat, hoping that the inevitable wouldn't happen. It therefore wasn't a surprise.

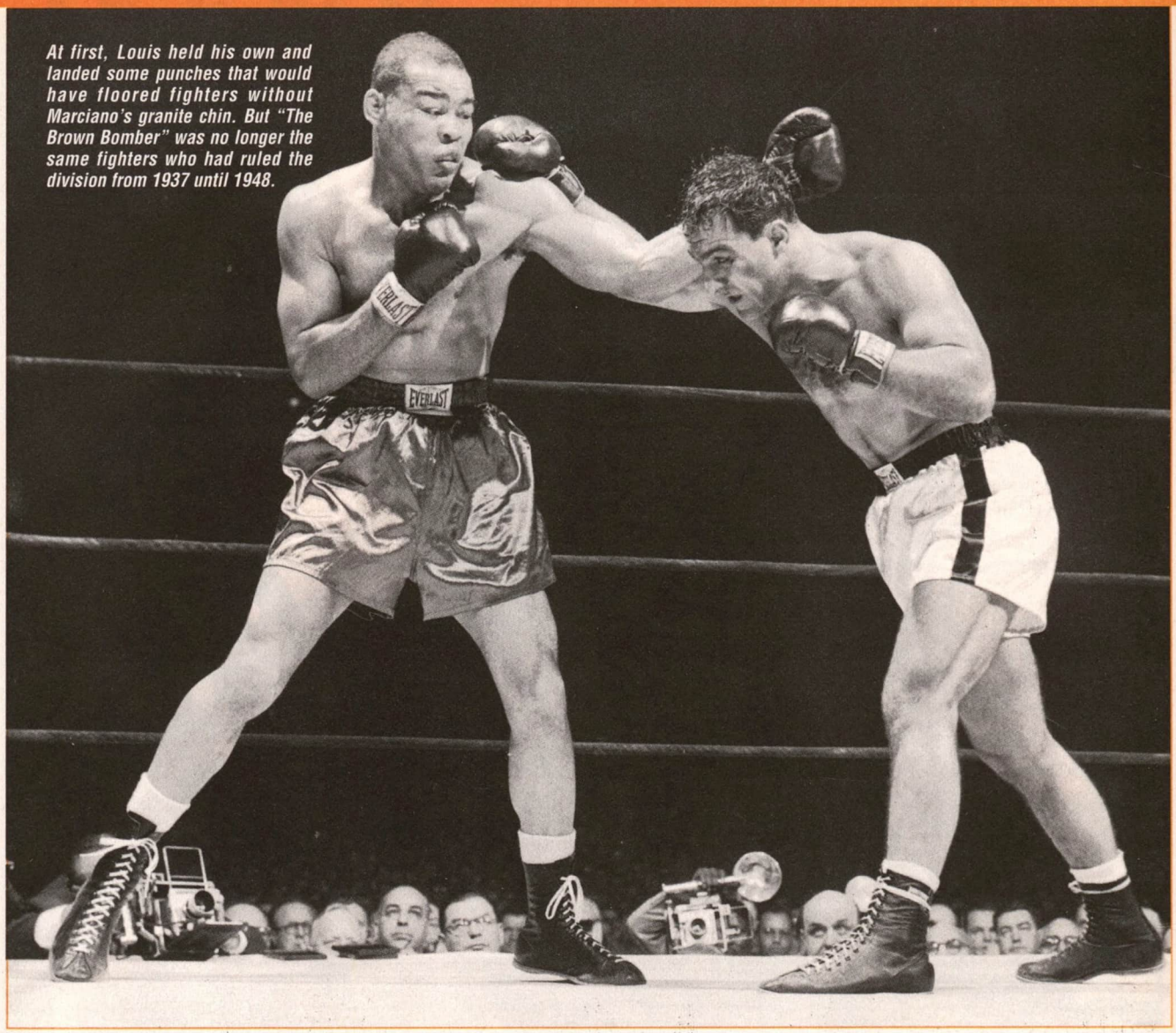
Father Time catches up with everyone eventually, and in the Garden bout, he caught up with Joe. It ended one of the longest, most stirring stories of boxing.

Louis was a unique character in pugilism. His career was just as unique. He had come from the cotton fields of Alabama to roll up one of the most remarkable records in the history of the division, a record that will stand the test for many years. In his fourth year as a professional, he won the world heavyweight crown, when only 23 years old.

Thereafter he successfully defended the crown 25 times for a world's record, and twice he figured in gross gates of more than a million dollars.

Many famous fighters wound up their careers as did Louis, but their passing was just another exit of a pugilistic hero. But Louis was not an ordinary hero. Unlike any fighters we can recall, other than John L. Sullivan and Jack Dempsey, the legend of invincibility woven around Louis persisted long after his retirement. Even after his defeat by Charles, the glamour that had surrounded the Bomber in his prime never lost its glitter.

Louis' good influence on boxing re-



At first, Louis held his own and landed some punches that would have floored fighters without Marciano's granite chin. But "The Brown Bomber" was no longer the same fighters who had ruled the division from 1937 until 1948.

mained to the very end of his career. It was fitting that his passing via the knockout route, with his body stretched on the canvas with head resting out on the apron of the ring, should have aroused public sympathy as was in evidence only once before, when James J. Corbett knocked out the Great John L.

They cried over Sullivan on that September day in New Orleans, for the Bostonian had occupied an altogether unique position in the emotional structure of America's worker millions.

There was no such crying in Louis' case, but there were lumps in the throats of thousands of admirers who realized that their fistic idol had been rendered helpless by a boxer 10 years his junior, a comparative novice who would have gone the way of many of Louis' other opponents had Joe and Rocky faced each other in the ring a few years back.

Louis, the symbol of invincibility and of dignity, had suddenly withered. In his place was a hulk stretched across the ring under the lower strand.

"The Dark Destroyer" had met the doom that had been predicted would be his unless he hung up his gloves. The youthful opponent who turned the trick had succeeded Louis as boxing's biggest attraction, far stronger in gate appeal than either Walcott or Charles. He has fistic power—that's what counts.

For Marciano, it was a tremendous victory. His future lies ahead of him as bright and rosy as 17 years previous was that of the man whom he conquered. To those who had seen Louis rise from an obscure amateur to the most fabulous ring figure since Jack Dempsey, Joe's defeat meant more than words can portray.

I liked Louis as a fighter. I always pictured him as boxing's greatest asset. That's why it hurt so much to see him lying on his back. My thoughts ran back to the Louis of old, who could numb an opponent with one punch, who could strike with the speed of a cobra.

The heavyweight situation has been revamped. Joe is out and Rocky is in, and no matter what any of the other contenders might do between now and next September. Marciano will rate the top shot over all, except Charles.

Rocky proved that though he lacks the skill of Charles, the craftiness of Walcott, or the all-around ability that made Louis so formidable, he possesses two great assets—a tremendous punch and fearlessness. Twice in the Louis fight he was caught with punches that ordinarily would have scored a knockdown or at least made a less coura-

geous battler think twice before attempting to mix it with Louis immediately thereafter. But Marciano didn't falter.

He pressed the issue by forcing Louis against the ropes, where he tossed effective blows at body and face. Such a heavyweight we haven't seen since Louis first hung up his gloves, because he couldn't find any worthwhile challengers.

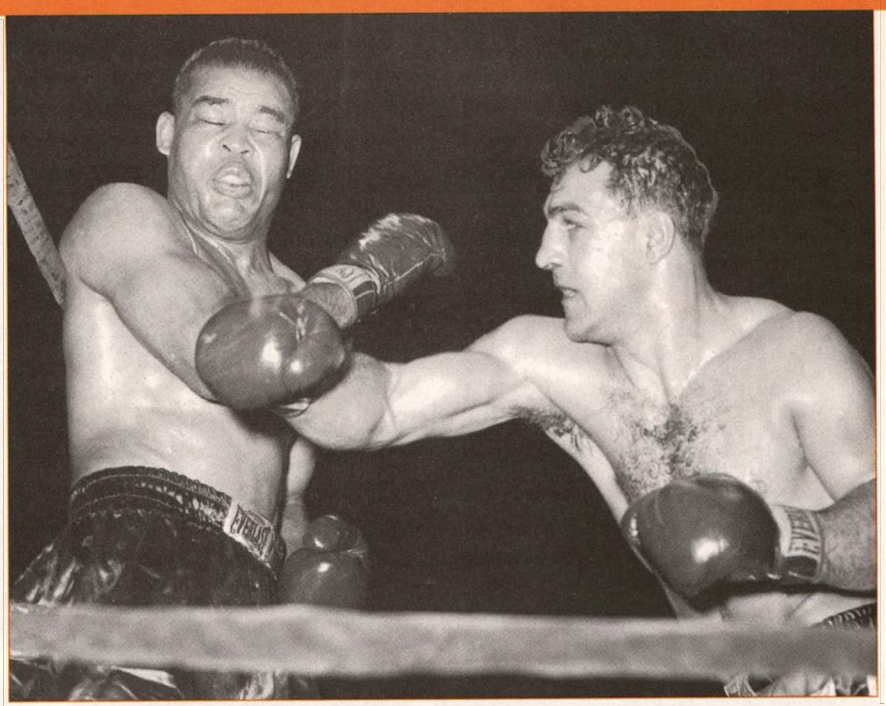
When he entered the ring, Rocky looked unimpressive. But it didn't take more than a minute for the onlookers to realize that Louis was facing an opponent full of determination, who was out to prove his right to a place in the fistic firmament.

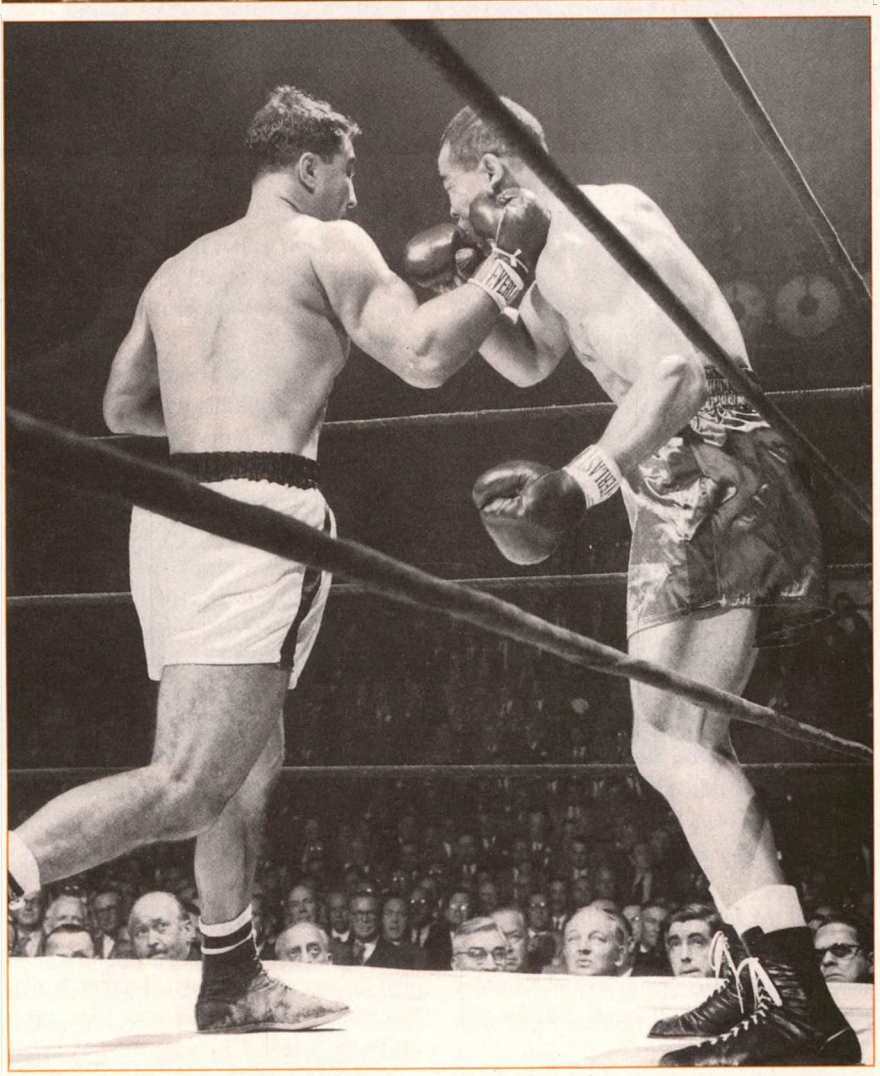
Rocky went about his task from the very start with grimness. He took the offensive, and though at times Louis' powerful left jab put Rocky off balance and set him back, there was no stopping him. A looping right in the first round that staggered Joe indicated the power of Rocky's punch.

His attack from a crouch was effective, despite the many misses, indicative of Rocky's crudeness. But he didn't miss any more than did his opponent, who kept stabbing and hooking, occasionally getting home a jarring blow, but missing too frequently to make his position comfortable. Louis' right was absolutely useless. The openings were there, but Joe didn't take advantage of them with the punch that in years past sent his rivals to the canvas.

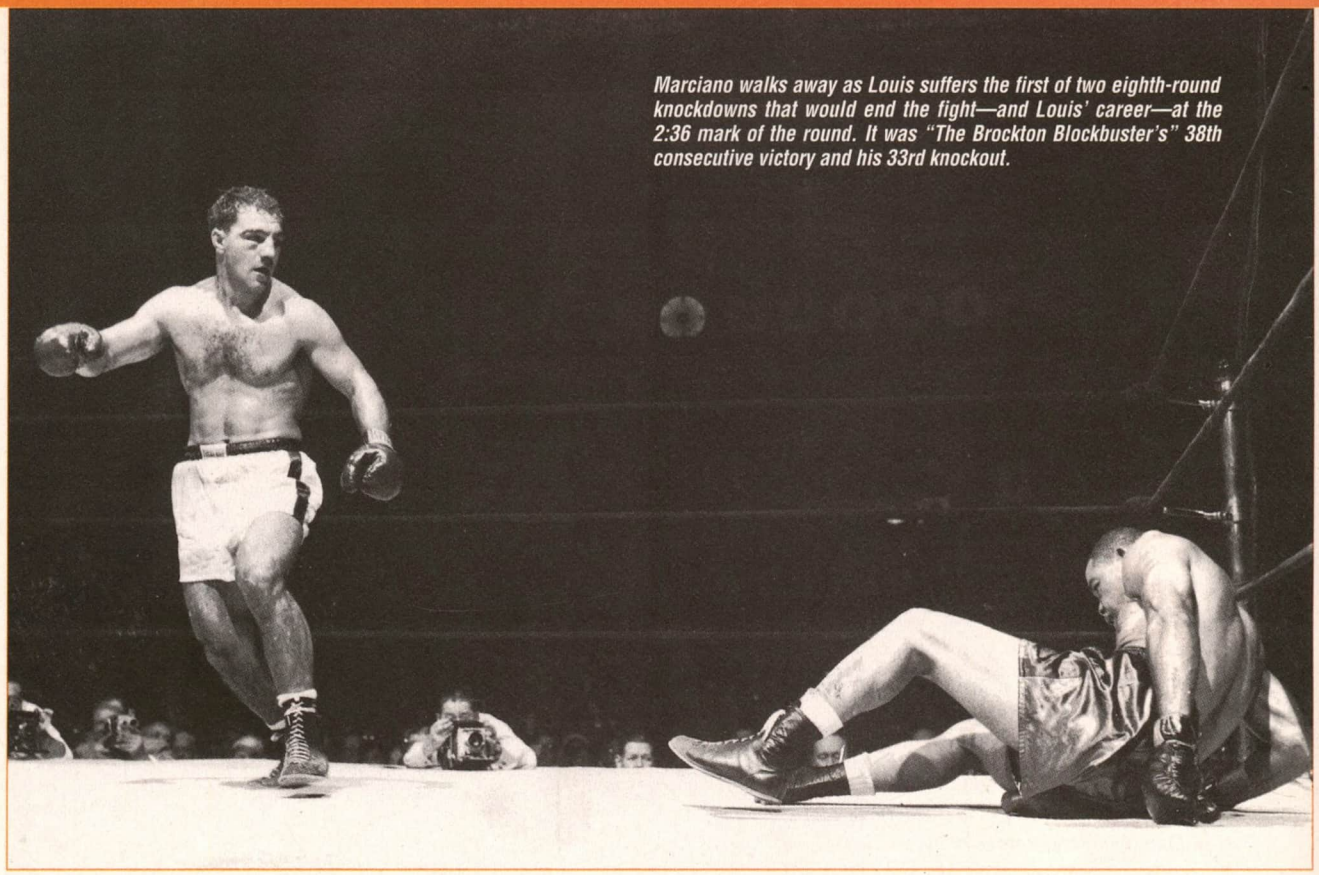
The once incomparable knocker-out, the man whose flaying fists had the opposition scared even before a bout got under way, was just another fighter to Marciano. It wasn't a one-sided affair by any means, despite the scorecard of Judge Agnello, who tabbed it five to two for Rocky up to the time of the knockout. While the majority of the scribes had Louis in the lead by four to three rounds and one even, all of the official tallies showed Rocky leading. Referee Ruby Goldstein's card had it four to two and one even, and that of Harold Barnes, four to three. My score favored Marciano, four to three.

Only in the early stages did Louis fare well. Starting with the sixth round he gave evidence of fatigue. In the sixth and seventh rounds his old uncertainties began to creep up on him. He hit, then hesitated. He jarred Marciano with straight lefts, had his right cocked for a follow-up punch, but couldn't let it go. His reflexes, which had responded so famously when he was at the





As Louis began to tire, Marciano threw his potent attack into high gear, battering the aging former champion with punishing blow, especially the right hand, which Marciano delivered from several different angles. Fans still wonder what would have happened if they met in their primes.



Marciano walks away as Louis suffers the first of two eighth-round knockdowns that would end the fight—and Louis' career—at the 2:36 mark of the round. It was "The Brockton Blockbuster's" 38th consecutive victory and his 33rd knockout.

height of his career, failed to answer the call from his brain.

In the second round, the opportunity presented itself to Joe for a right that might have proved decisive but never was delivered. Again, in the seventh, Louis let Marciano escape.

Once Marciano took command there was no halting him. He looped his right, his best punch. Sometimes it connected with jarring effect, and just as often it fanned the air. But when the target was hit, Louis' head went back with a jar or he jumped into a clinch, hurt.

Rocky showed that he has endurance, a sock, and confidence. Under the guiding hand of one of the world's best trainers, Charley Goldman, Rocky may acquire knowledge of ring science. If that day arrives, we'll have a fighter who'll attract as much attention as any great heavyweight of the past.

Until the fateful eighth, there was little indication that Louis would not go the route. Had he done so, he might have added to his string of comeback victories. But the tide turned suddenly.

Marciano, getting in close with body attacks as he had been doing from the opening bell in an attempt to wear down his opponent, forced Louis to the ropes. There he tagged Joe with a powerful left hook to the jaw. Louis dropped to the canvas. Joe went down with legs crossed. He took a count of eight.

Marciano, with the eagerness of a youngster about to reach his goal, leaped in and let go with a fast flurry of punches, most of which missed the target. Then, steadying himself, he leveled his blows directly for the jaw. One struck with such power that it knocked Joe against the ropes.

Louis' eyes glazed. His hands dropped to his sides. He stood facing his opponent with the same look we saw when Max Schmeling pounded him to a praying position for Louis' first knockout.

No longer was Rocky the wild man. Now he realized fully the position into which he had pounded his rival. Rocky stepped back about a foot and, with the full force of his shoulders behind the punch, he let go a right that crashed with terrific force against Joe's jaw. Through the ropes toppled the erstwhile Brown Bomber, a portion of his body, including the head, landing on the apron of the ring.

Goldstein, who did a most capable job as third man in the ring, saw the futility of a count. He quickly waved his hands, indicating the end of the bout and the end of Joe Louis as a fighter.

It was only the second time in a career of 17 years that Louis had been stopped. Schmeling first performed the feat 15 years ago.

The manner in which Louis struck the canvas and lay there brought speedy action from his handlers and Dr. Nardiello, who leaped over the ropes and rushed to Joe's aid. It was feared for a time that he was badly hurt, but after several minutes he got to his feet and walked to his seat. With tears in his eyes, he left the ring to the man who had succeeded in putting the word "finish" to Louis' career.

Bedlam broke loose as Rocky's followers from Brockton in droves raced toward the ring, upset and even broke reporters' typewriters as they tried to get into the roped square. One would have thought that Rocky had won the world championship, so terrific was the acclaim.

An era ended with that kayo and another started, with youth taking the place of old age, with a rising youngster supplanting the veteran as boxing's newest box-office attraction. Old age that had crept up on Joe, and which he defied, finally took its toll and the knockout he suffered undoubt-

edly came as a blessing in disguise. It will save Joe from a disastrous ending, which usually follows when one disregards indefinitely the warnings of Father Time.

Louis lost the way a real fighting man, a great champion of the past, would like to have it. He passed out of the picture like the champ he always has been—in a clean, honest fight.

Louis scaled 212—to Marciano's 187, but Rocky didn't mind this difference, judging by his performance. A crowd of 17,241 paid $152,845 to see the fight, which was the 38th professional one for Marciano.

The net was $116,952. The radio and television rights were sold for $185,000 and the rivals agreed to a fixed payment, Louis receiving $50,000 and Marciano $33,750, which sums were included in the checks of $94,281 paid to Joe and $49,605 given to Marciano.

While waiting for his title chance, Rocky will engage in several bouts, his first probably in January with Lee Savold, the easiest presumably of five opponents offered him.

The fight with Roland LaStarza was too close to give Rocky comfort. A return bout had been promised LaStarza, but that's as far as the promise has gone. He deserves the chance, if for no other reason than to prove that Marciano is the best of the newly arrived contenders for world honors.

Millions of fans were saddened by the demise of the man who had ruled the heavyweight division with such distinction for so many years. Louis never fought again.

How good is Rocky? That's a common query these days. In the days when Joe Louis was at the height of his career, they were comparing the Brown Bomber with Jack Dempsey. Reams of copy were written about a mythical battle in which these two stalwarts, each in their prime, faced each other. And now, foolishly radio commentators, with nothing better to select apparently, are pitting Rocky against Dempsey in such a bout.

It will take a long time for Marciano to be listed alongside Dempsey. Jack even before he whipped Jess Willard to win the world crown was a far better fighter than is Marciano today. But Rocky may yet get there. He has what it takes to reach the top. But to make his rise easier, he'll have to learn the rudiments of the science of self-defense, something he lacks completely.

His chances for gaining the top rung of the ladder are enhanced by the fact that there are remarkably few stumbling blocks in his path. Consider what Dempsey and Louis had to hurdle to reach the heights and you have the answer to Marciano's rapid rise. ■

ROCKY REMEMBERED

July 28, 1952

Rocky's Knockout Of Matthews Recalls Young Dempsey

MARCIANO NEXT CHAMPION

By Nat Fleischer

The next heavyweight champion of the world. That was the tag most of the 31,188 boxing devotees in Yankee Stadium on the night of July 28 hung on Rocky Marciano, from Brockton, Massachusetts, 28 years of age, with four years of service in the Army behind him, and 36 knockout triumphs in his five-year record.

The prediction of championship stature for Marciano came in the immediate wake of his second-round knockout of Harry Matthews in their elimination contest. The round lasted only 2 minutes, 4 seconds.

Marciano jabbed a left, then hooked two lefts to the jaw, and Matthews' brief space of glory, following his impressive 10-round decision over Bob Murphy, had come to an end.

Marciano holds the heavybag for former champion Jack Dempsey. Marciano's second-round kayo of Harry Matthews had many observers, including The Ring's *Nat Fleischer, drawing comparisons between the "Manassa Mauler" and "The Brockton Blockbuster."*

Heavyweight king Jersey Joe Walcott smiles royally as Matthews and Marciano square off at the contract signing for their fight. It was generally assumed that Walcott would defend against the winner.

"This guy Marciano is a throwback to Jack Dempsey," exuberated Jack Kearns, who had managed the "Manassa Mauler."

"He hits hard with either hand, comes in harder and tougher when hurt, is no easy target, and is the best puncher since Jack."

That about encapsulated the popular verdict, and the opinion of most of the experts.

Marciano now definitely is Jersey Joe Walcott's next opponent. The International Boxing Club plans the fight in Philadelphia for September 23. Now it's up to Walcott, who saw Marciano maul Matthews and said, "I believe this boy will be hard to handle."

The amazed spectators, who had been uncertain about Rocky's fighting qualities, compared him to the Manassa Mauler, and were justified in the comparison with the Dempsey who had flattened big Fred Fulton in a similar manner many years ago, and had won the world crown from Jess Willard in his next battle.

Marciano gave one of the finest exhibitions of destructive punching seen in years. Marciano brought down his Seattle opponent in a manner that almost made ringsiders feel the punches.

Thus Rocky continued his string of victories, with 42 to his credit, and brought with his quick triumph a sharp revival of interest in the heavyweight division.

Another era, such as the fight game enjoyed when Dempsey and Joe Louis were at the helm, now looms. It's the sock that brings out the fans in boxing, and Marciano has it.

The punches that knocked out Matthews, like those of Dempsey, were delivered from a crouch, and didn't travel more than a few inches.

Walcott, sitting at the ringside, leaped to his feet and viewed what might happen to him when he puts his crown on the line in a title bout with Rocky.

Johnny Williams, British Empire titleholder, who sat near Walcott, almost swallowed the gum he was chewing as he shook his head when Matthews hit the canvas, and seemed to say, "I don't want any part of this Marciano person."

Marciano has made the penultimate grade. The New Englander with the primitive fighting style has proved to the skeptical that he's a savage clouter, with a paralyzing, wicked left hook, the blow that made Dempsey famous. Aside from his tremendous hitting power, he has little to commend him as a great battler. But what he does possess is sufficient.

The finish came with dramatic suddenness. The reporters, who with few exceptions had chalked up the first round for Matthews, didn't expect the explosion to come so soon, though the majority figured that Harry wouldn't last eight rounds.

Matthews, clever and a powerful hitter, did exceedingly well in that opening round and came out for the second with confidence that he could continue to make his opponent miss, while stabbing him repeatedly. Rocky presented almost an open target, and Matthews took full advantage of it as he drove home powerful left hooks to body and jaw and shot home right hand drives to the midsection.

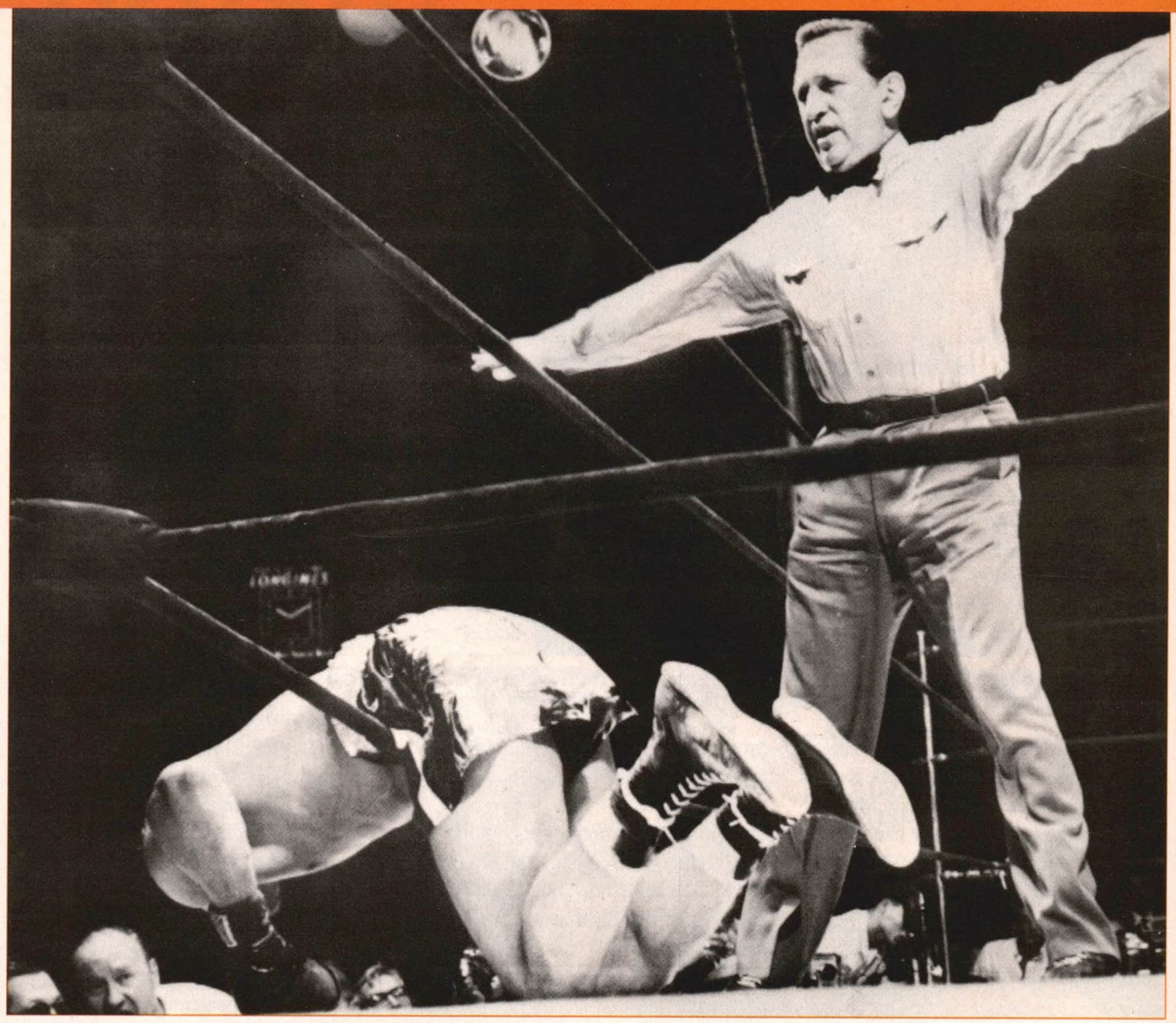
Rocky wasn't idle while this was going on. He kept boring in and tossing punches, but most of them failed to land as Matthews stepped out of range. But when in close, Marciano battered short lefts and rights to the stomach that hurt.

Then came the second, with Rocky starting off even more wildly than in the opening session. He was awkward and floundered as he missed his blows and was pulled off-balance. Matthews, following Jack Hurley's instructions, kept peppering Rocky's face with straight lefts and occasional left hooks and three smashing right crosses that rocked him.

Marciano, apparently riled at his awkwardness and failure to connect, suddenly moved in and started a barrage of right crosses to head and jaw. Matthews, still clever, rode with some of them, but others made him wince.

He started a backward movement when a straight left to the face tossed his head back. Then came the two punches that finished the fight. A left hook crashed against Matthews' chin and made his knees buckle. The thud could be heard clearly at the ringside and the force of the punch was such as to almost take Matthews' head off. He backed toward his corner.

As the Seattle battler started to fall, Marciano, quick as a flash, wasting no time, got in for the kill. Again, he let go a left hook, far more powerful than the first one, and Matthews went down, his head striking the lower ring rope in his corner. He slid into a reclining position and then fell backward.



Referee Ray Miller signals that the Marciano-Matthews match is over, shortly after Rocky put his foe down and partway out of the ring with a furious second-round assault. Many considered it the most impressive performance of Marciano's pre-championship career.

An elated Marciano leaped across the ring to a neutral corner, the confused knockdown timer, Harry Kessler, sat in his chair, eyes glued on Matthews, apparently as much stunned by what had happened as was the victim of Marciano's punching. While referee Ray Miller started the count, Kessler remained confused until the third man in the ring had reached seven. Then Kessler suddenly awakened to the fact that he was the knockdown timer and finished the count with Miller.

For a few seconds, Matthews raised himself partially. At the count of eight, he arose to a half crouch. Then he fell back and was draped over the lower rope as Miller completed the fatal 10. It was as convincing a finish as has been seen in a major fight in a long time.

Thus Matthews, who had won 57 pro battles by knockout and had been halted only once in his long career, had reached the end of the lane so far as the world heavyweight title was concerned. But he's not through by any means. Matthews is still an excellent fighter and a good attraction.

By scaling only 179 pounds, against 187 for Marciano, Matthews proved that he is only an overgrown light heavyweight. In that division, he classes close to the top and henceforth he should forget the heavier men and go after Joey Maxim. The myth of his greatness as a heavyweight has been shattered. But he still has a great opportunity to gain a crown if he is willing to gamble his chances against Archie Moore for the right to face Maxim.

The cry so frequently raised by Hurley, that Moore is no drawing card, no longer holds since Matthews proved that neither he nor Rocky could meet the requirements.

When their contest was arranged, it was predicted by their managers and the IBC that half a million dollars would be grossed and that the 50,000 would see the fight. Only 31,188 persons viewed it and the gross amounted only to $215,707.

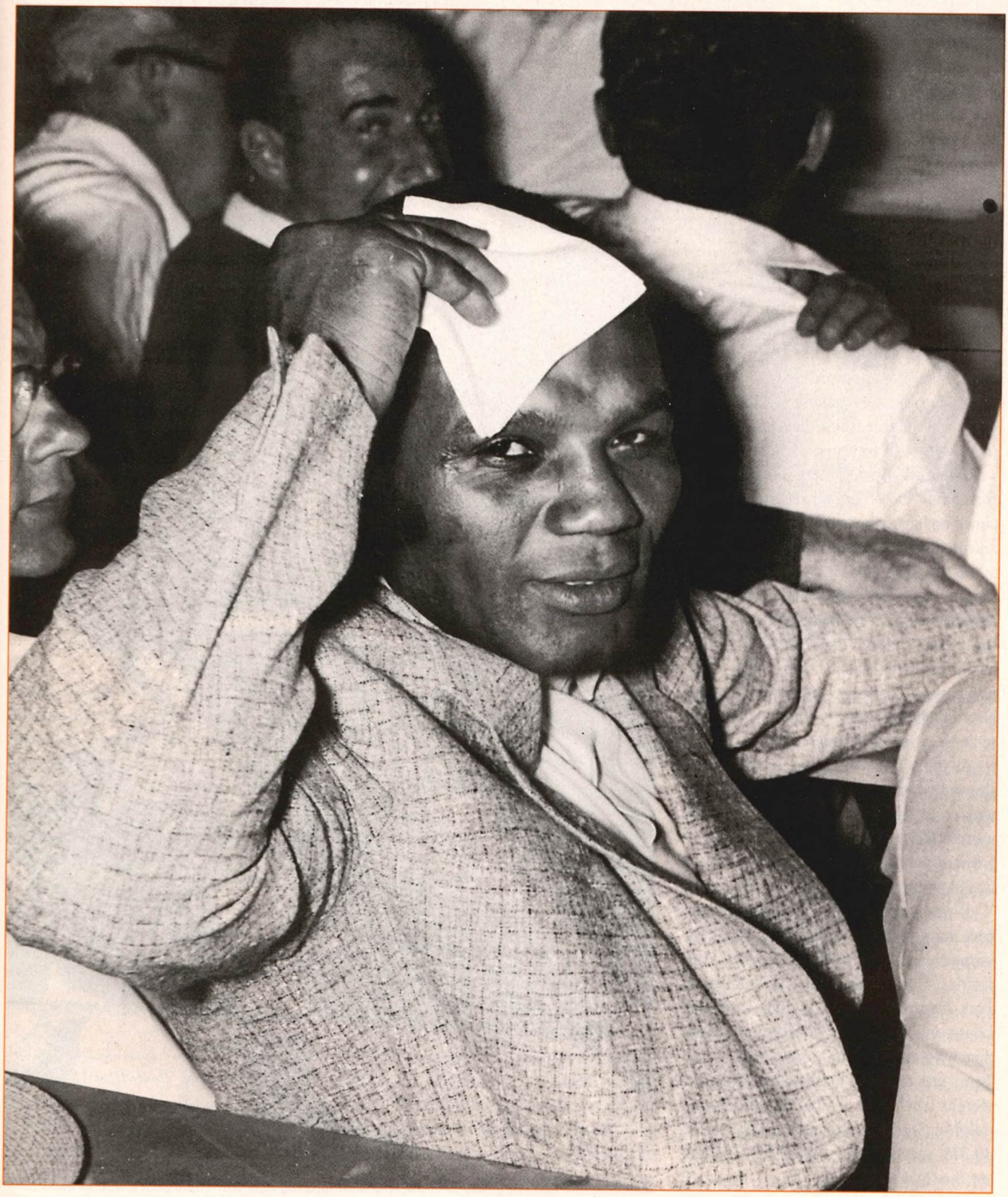
With Marciano's accomplishments in the Matthews fight as a build-up for the world heavyweight championship match, the contest cannot miss international interest, with a huge gate. But if and when he faces Walcott, he won't have the cinch he had against Matthews. He'll meet a seasoned veteran who is clever and can

sock with as much punishing power when he lands full force as does Marciano.

Walcott will be the hardest nut Rocky has been asked to crack and he'll have to carry into the ring with him more than lethal power in those iron fists of his.

But it's a cinch Rocky will have it. He has the ideal temperament for a fighter. He loves the game and is a willing pupil. His jaw can take a punch and his body is so built that he can absorb heavy battering.

So, it's meet the next champion, Rocky Marciano, of Brockton, Massachusetts. ■



Heavyweight champion Jersey Joe Walcott, sitting ringside for the Marciano-Matthews fight, wipes the sweat from his brow. Was it the July heat at Yankee Stadium or the thought of facing Marciano that made Walcott perspire?

ROCKY REMEMBERED

September 23, 1952

Marciano Knocks Out Walcott To Win Heavyweight Title

THE STORY WITH A PUNCH

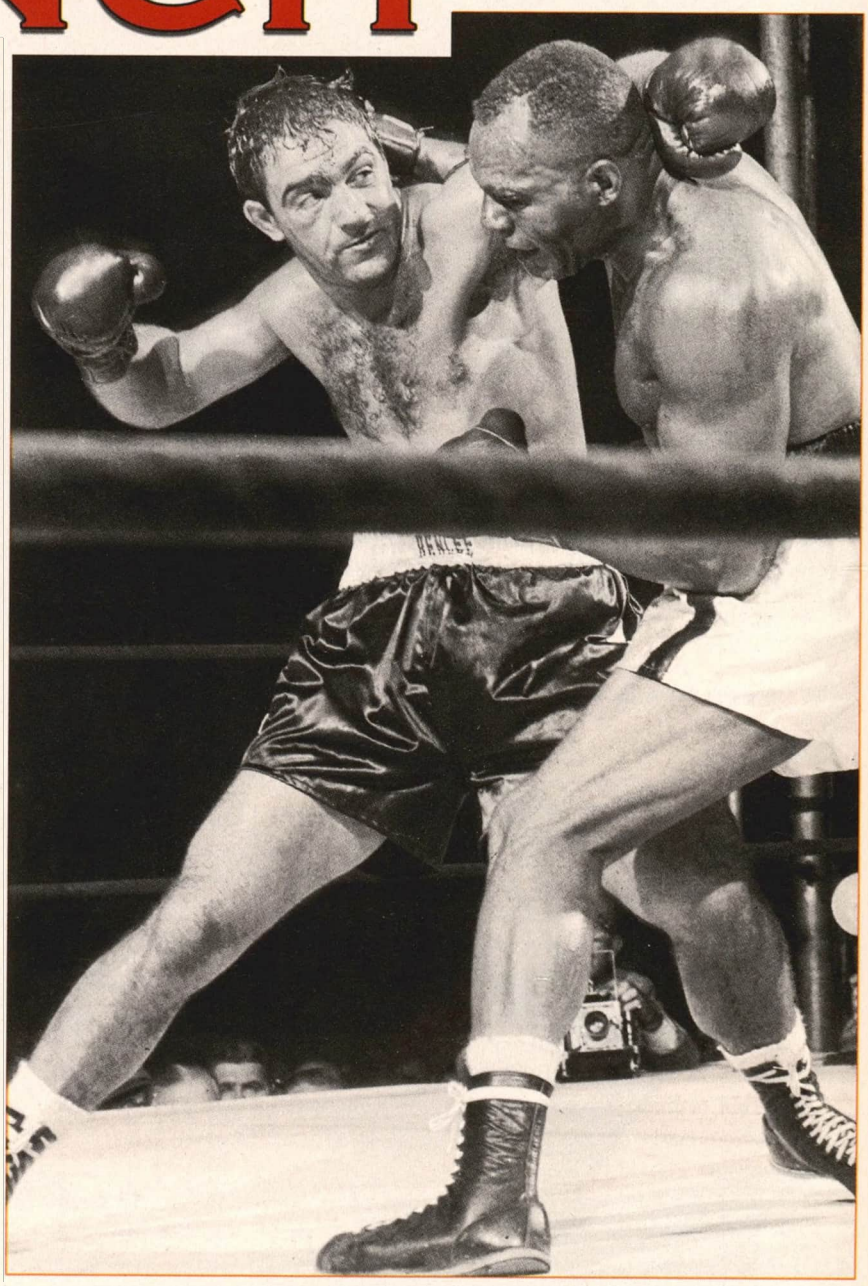
By Nat Fleischer

A remarkable fighter went to the post the underdog in a world heavyweight championship bout and almost succeeded in making suckers out of those who belittled him, but Father Time caught up with him just as it seemed he would be acclaimed "the winner and still champion." One short, powerful right-hand punch and age were sufficient to cause the downfall of Jersey Joe Walcott and to rise to the top of the ladder as the new heavyweight king, Rocky Marciano of Brockton, Massachusetts. The manner in which the Bay Stater ended a tough, brawling, furious battle in 43 seconds of the 13th round was a reminder of the days when another New Englander, John L. Sullivan, ruled the roost by virtue of his mighty fists.

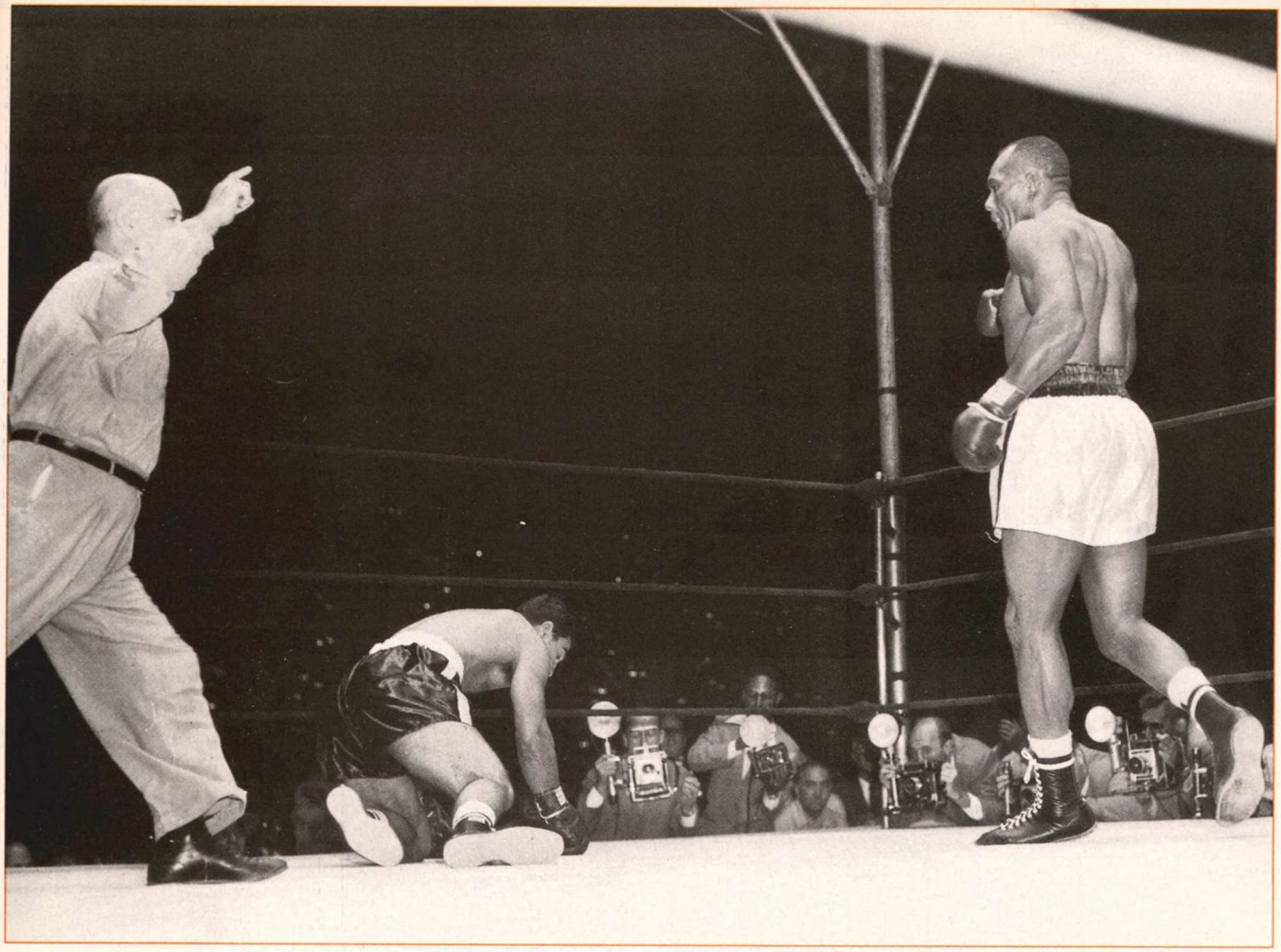
As the scorecards of the three officials showed when the grueling, bloody contest was over, there was only one way in which Rocky could have gained the crown—via the knockout route. And that he did with one solid crash.

It was a wallop that placed him on the pedestal previously occupied by such ring immortals as Sullivan, Jim Corbett, Jim Jeffries, Bob Fitzsimmons, Jack Johnson, Jack Dempsey, Gene Tunney, and Joe Louis, among others. Thus the former soldier who learned his boxing in the U.S. Army was crowned the 17th world heavyweight titleholder in the gigantic Philadelphia Stadium before a gathering of 40,379 spectators who paid $504,645 to see the fight.

The official tally at the end of the 12th round showed Rocky behind on the score-



Marciano and Walcott go toe-to-toe during their thrilling fight that attracted a crowd of more than 40,000 to Philadelphia's Municipal Stadium. Nat Fleischer wrote that it was the best heavyweight title fight he'd seen in a long time and predicted a lengthy reign for the new champion.



It looked like Walcott would retain the title when he floored Marciano with a left hook in the opening round of the scheduled 15-rounder. But Marciano beat the count with time to spare and charged after Jersey Joe, determined to take the crown away from the 39-year-old champion.

cards, though there was quite a division among the newspapermen regarding the margin of the score. Many had the fight on an even basis and several had Marciano leading by the margin of one or two rounds. Here is how the officials tabbed it:

Referee Taggert
W M W M M M W W W E W W
(Walcott leading by a score of 7-4-1)

Judge Tomacso
W W M W M M W W M M W W
(Walcott leading by a 7 to 5 tally)

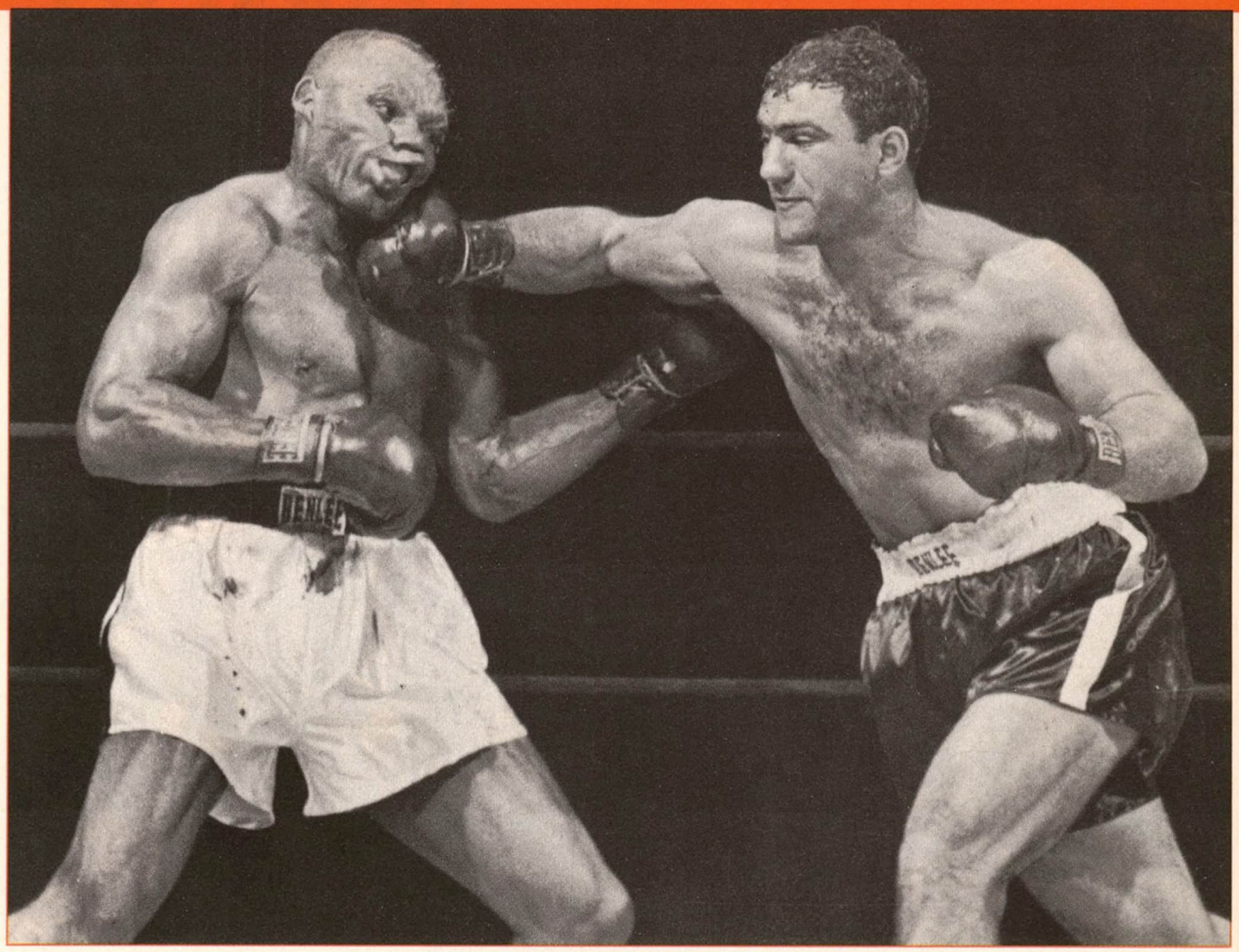
Judge Clayton
W W M M M W W W M W W W
(Walcott in the lead by 8 to 4)

The ending to this spectacular, thrilling encounter, which brought to the throne the first white king since Louis had taken the crown from James J. Braddock in Chicago on June 22, 1937, was as unexpected as was the knockout with one blow of Ezzard Charles by the man whom Marciano had dethroned. The clout struck its mark with such suddenness and such swiftness that many in the vast assembly didn't see it land. But what they saw as they stood up thunderstruck, with eyes focused on the ring as old Jersey Joe was sprawled in a grotesque position, against the ropes, an inert mass, was convincing proof to them that an explosive fist must have landed with T.N.T. force to make a human hulk so helpless.

By his victory, Marciano proved that he can take it as well as dish it out; that he possesses a fighting heart and the greatest asset of a crowd-pleaser—the sock. Though he has much to learn, Rocky, with youth and strength to aid him, should be able to retain his crown against the assaults of any of the present crop of heavies and will probably hold on to his title for a long time. The payoff punch will long live in the memory of those who were fortunate to see it.

It wasn't so much old age that beat Walcott. It wasn't a decrepit old man who faced the "Brockton Blockbuster." Walcott put up one of the best fights of his long career, a most remarkable one. Had he not been up against the ropes when the mighty crash felled him, he might have carried on to win the nod of the three officials. It was a miscalculation of a trick he often had used to good advantage that cost him the fight. With back against the ropes, he shifted his body in an effort to baffle his opponent, and that movement brought him in direct line for the right that put him away.

It was truly a great and grueling fight. Almost until the final blow was struck, the ageless cutie from Camden, New Jersey, was as dangerous an opponent as was the challenger. Walcott had repeatedly



In one of the most famous boxing photographs of all-time, Marciano is pictured distorting Walcott's face with a flush right to the jaw. It was not, however, the punch that floored Walcott in the 13th round, as is commonly believed.

thrilled the spectators, his own partisan rooters, and the Massachusetts adherents by trading punches with his younger and powerful rival.

At times when he tired, he used his backward style to advantage, but when stung by a hard punch, he sailed right in and then it was a matter of give-and-take. Walcott scored the only knockdown prior to the kayo. That came in the very first minute of the opening round when he floored Rocky with a hard left to the jaw for a count of three.

Rocky knew that he had been in a fight. When the 10-count had been tolled in the fatal 13th, Rocky was a mighty weary young man. Besides surviving the three-count knockdown, he suffered several other indignities, among them a deep gash on the bridge of his nose that required four stitches and a scalp wound that covered his face with claret.

Walcott sustained an inch-and-a-half cut over his left eye. Though the victor landed many effective, hard wallops to Walcott's body and jaw, he wasn't free from severe punishment. Jersey Joe made Rocky's knees buckle in the fifth with a solid right to the head and repeated in the 11th with two powerful lefts to the side of the face. And in the round before the finish, a right to the midsection almost doubled Marciano. He won the fight but had to go all-out to turn the trick.

The styles of the opponents fit in nicely for the kind of scrap to which the spectators were treated. It enabled them to provide the onlookers with a thriller that taxed the stamina of each to the limit and which enabled the more polished, aged champion to show at his best. Unlike many of his previous battles, the amazing Walcott electrified the spectators more so than did his brash challenger because he never flinched at slugging exchanges with the man who many experts have dubbed a second Jack Dempsey.

Marciano will have to do considerably more than he did against Jersey Joe to reach the Dempsey heights. But this much must be said for the Brockton fighter—he is the only pugilist of the past three decades with a one-punch knockout blow. The fight with Walcott was his 43rd triumph and his 38th knockout victory. He is the one world heavyweight king who gained a title with a perfect record.

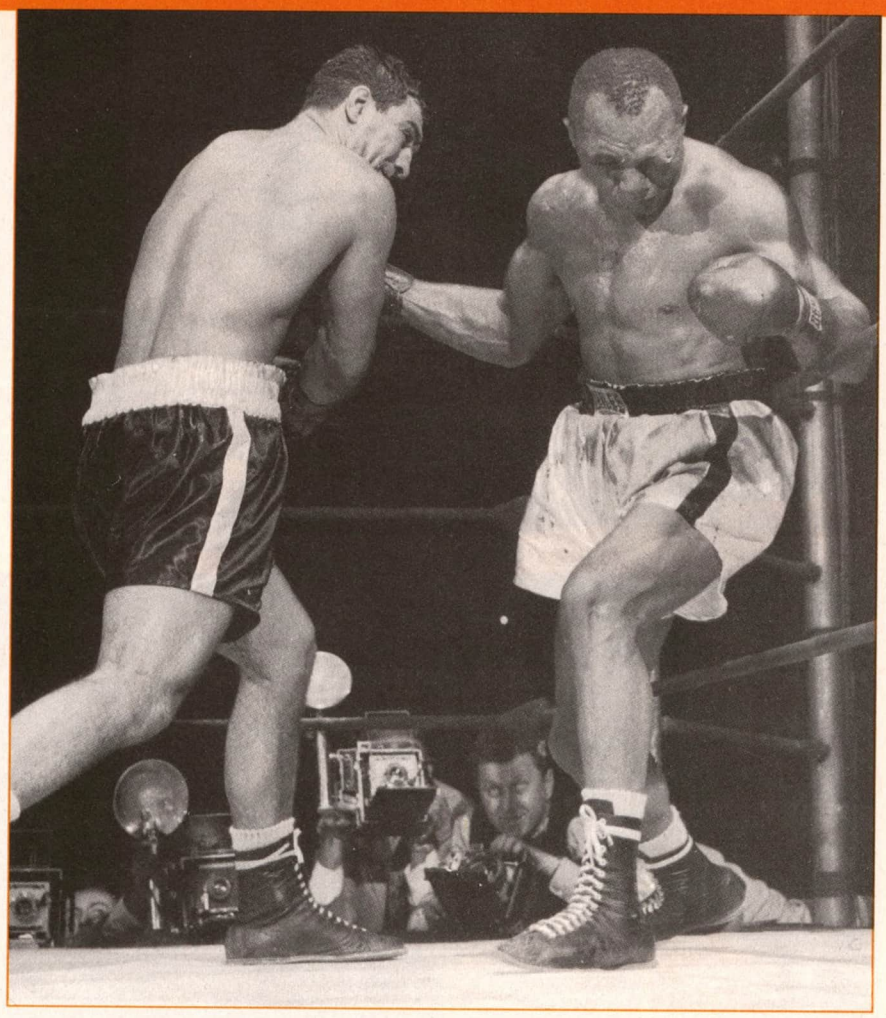
In winning the championship, he proved himself every inch the fighting man. Though awkward, crude, missing punches as would a raw novice, lacking the finesse of his veteran opponent, Rocky nevertheless came forward at all times. He took severe punishment at intervals, was rocked occasionally with blows that would have put a less hardy fighter to sleep, but through it all, he showed the fighting determination of a hardy ring warrior and gained his objective—the crown.

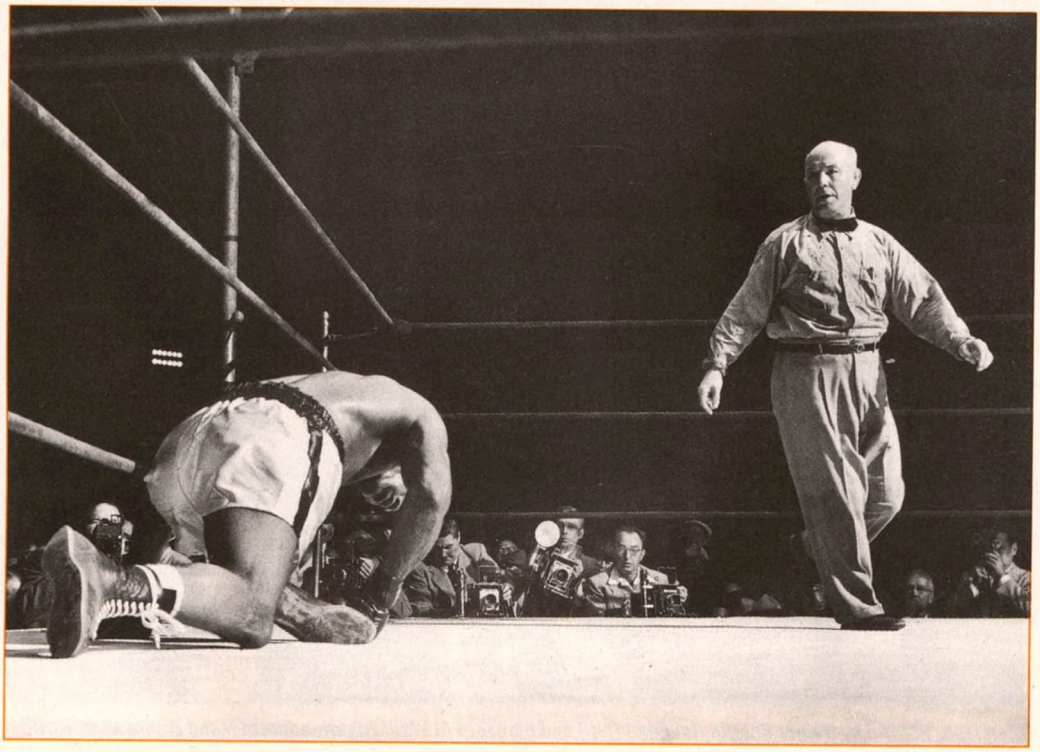
A less hardy battler might have been put away in the opening round. In that session Jersey Joe handed his unschooled opponent a severe shellacking, but there was no stopping the "Brockton Blockbuster." The punch that downed Rocky was probably responsible for the fighting spirit he displayed thereafter. He seemed bent on avenging that indignity and on several occasions it seemed that he would succeed via the kayo route.

But until the 13th, he found in the defending titleholder a fighter who was equally determined to retain his crown and so, round after round, Rocky plodded on, buffeted at times with jarring T.N.T. wallops, but ever pressing forward until his one punch ended proceedings.

Under the impact of that blow, Walcott assumed a most grotesque posture. He started to sag while leaning against the ropes, then began sliding down on his left side. Walcott's left hand grabbed instinctively at the middle strand as he slid to his right knee, slumped slowly forward, and landed on his head. His face was grovelled on the canvas. Just before Referee Charley Daggert began to toll off the fatal 10, Rocky grazed Walcott's cheek with a left that in England might have caused his disqualification for striking while his opponent was down, since Jersey Joe's left knee had already touched the canvas. It was a tense moment. That wasn't the only time that the rules were violated, for several times the rivals struck punches after the round had ended. But that was excusable since the bell couldn't be heard clearly due to the din.

While Daggert, target of many complaints from Marciano's manager, Al Weill, who found fault with his officiating, kept counting over the fallen champion, there was never a twitch from Walcott as he lay crumpled on the canvas. The spectators looked on in awe. Many feared that old Jersey Joe had been fatally injured, so tense was his body.





Behind on all three official scorecards, Marciano drilled Walcott with a crushing right in the 13th round (above) that sent the defending champion down and out (below), concluding an action-packed brawl that is still remembered as one of the greatest heavyweight championship fights of all-time.

It was the first time that Marciano had ever gone beyond 10 rounds and he proved equal to the task. His amazingly powerful body and his strong fighting heart enabled him to meet the test successfully.

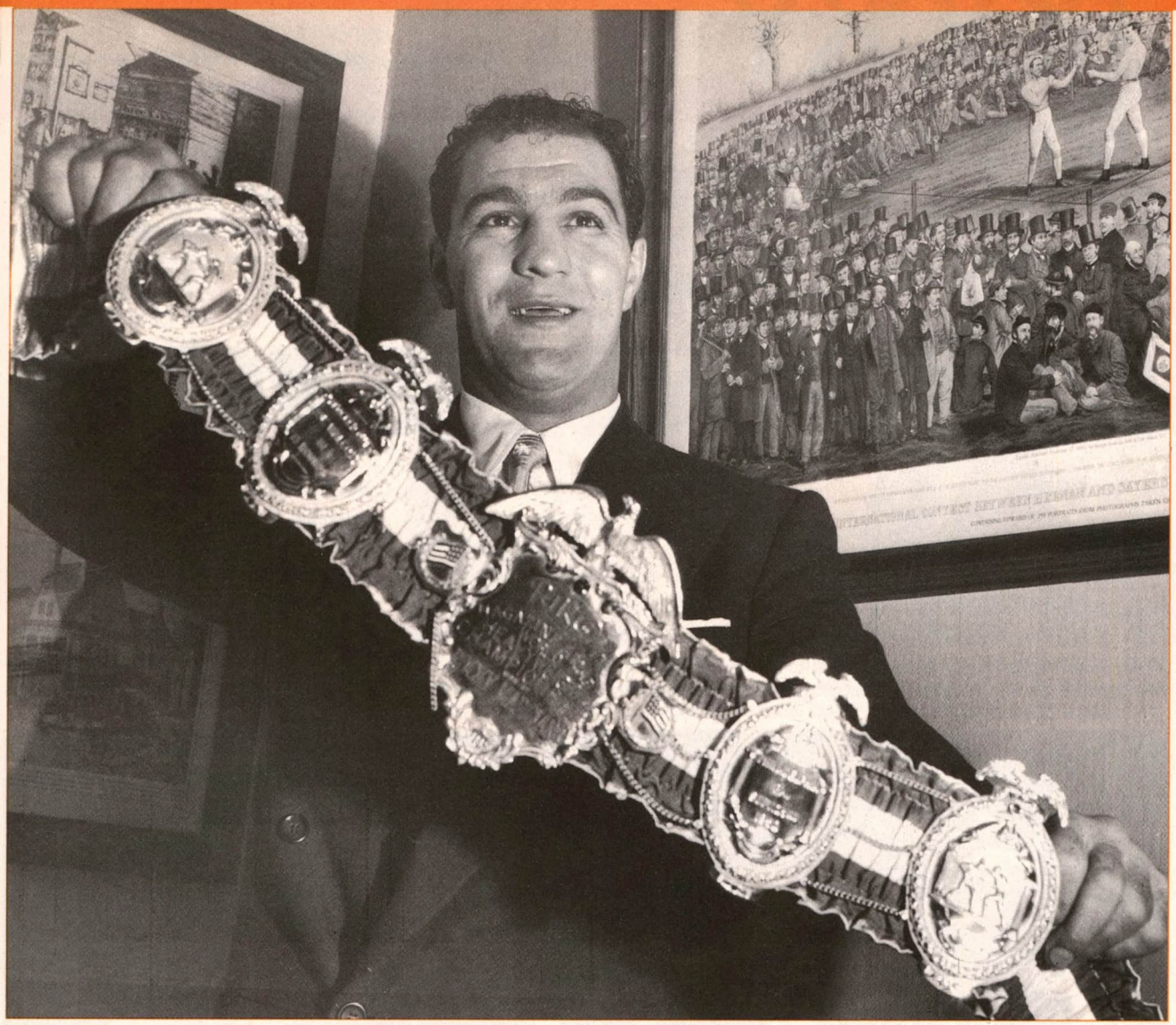
The first and the 11th rounds were Walcott's best. In the latter, Old Man Joe whipped a savage right to the stomach that made even the ringsiders wince. The blow caused Rocky's knees to sag and Jersey Joe, quick to take advantage of the situation, followed with a powerful left hook to the head that brought the blood streaming down his rival's face and blinding him. But not even those solid wallops stopped Rocky. Savagely slugged and bloody though he was, he kept coming forward, eager to fight it out with the champion. He took plenty, but never faltered.

It was by far the best heavyweight championship fight I've seen in many years, a throwback to the days of Dempsey, Jeffries, and Jack Johnson, days when gory, heart-throbbing ring battles were the rule rather than the exception. Walcott went out the way that real champions want to go. Though he is at an age when he should be retired, his performance against Marciano merits the return bout, as such a contest, despite Jersey Joe's age, will draw a gathering of 50,000.

As for Marciano, he showed us what we were eager to learn—that he can take it on the chin, in the heart, and in the mid-section and can fight back. His sole weakness is lack of boxing finesse. He may never learn boxing science, but with his terrific punch, one that makes him probably the best one-punch knockerout in recent years, he can afford to be science shy.

Boxing, which has been sadly in need of help, has profited immensely by Marciano's victory and by the stalwart defense of the crown by Walcott. Pity that unlike the many ordinary contests that

Marciano, flanked by trainer Charlie Goldman (left) and manager Al Weill (right), addresses the media after his title-winning bout with Walcott.



Symbol of a true champion: Marciano proudly displays THE RING championship belt he was awarded for his victory over Walcott.

have been brought into the homes by television, this fight, the best since the Dempsey-Tunney affair in Chicago many years ago, was lost to those who couldn't afford to go to the Philly Stadium or couldn't get to the theaters where the affair was shown on the screen before packed houses.

It pitted age against youth; a scientific, hard-hitting, aged veteran who has been participating in the sport for almost a quarter of a century, an unschooled member of the pugilistic fraternity whose sole asset rested in the power of his punch and a fighting heart—in short, skill against crude strength and the latter in the end triumphed. Thrills, sustained action, suspense, expectation, and a dramatic finish. What more could one ask? It brought into action the oldest champion ever to defend his crown in the roped square and a young product of the American Army who learned the rudiments of boxing as a GI in France and still has much to learn, though a world titleholder, before he can be dubbed a finished fighter.

The old champion's decision to call it quits following the kayo was quickly altered after he had had sufficient time to rest from his ordeal and consider his future. "With six kids to feed and to educate," as he expressed it, "and a million-dollar gate foreseen for our next battle, and faith in my ability to set a world mark by regaining the crown, I have asked my manager to arrange for the return bout for which my contract calls."

And there are none among the 40,379 paid fight fans, I'm certain, who would deny Walcott that opportunity. He earned it. At close to 39, he showed in the Philadelphia bout that physically he is on a par with the average fighter five years or more his junior. The return contest will undoubtedly be staged in New York in June, though Weill would prefer it in the Garden in March.

The repeated complaints of Al Weill, who bitterly assailed the handlers of Walcott, whom he accused of placing some substance on Jersey Joe's shoulder that had a blinding effect on Marciano, marred the affair somewhat, but only those at the ringside were annoyed. Walcott's seconds used a heavy yellowish salve over his cut eye and either this or a rubbing liniment that got on Joe's gloves tormented Rocky with a burning pain during the 11th and 12th rounds in which Walcott scored heavily. ■

ROCKY REMEMBERED

September 24, 1953

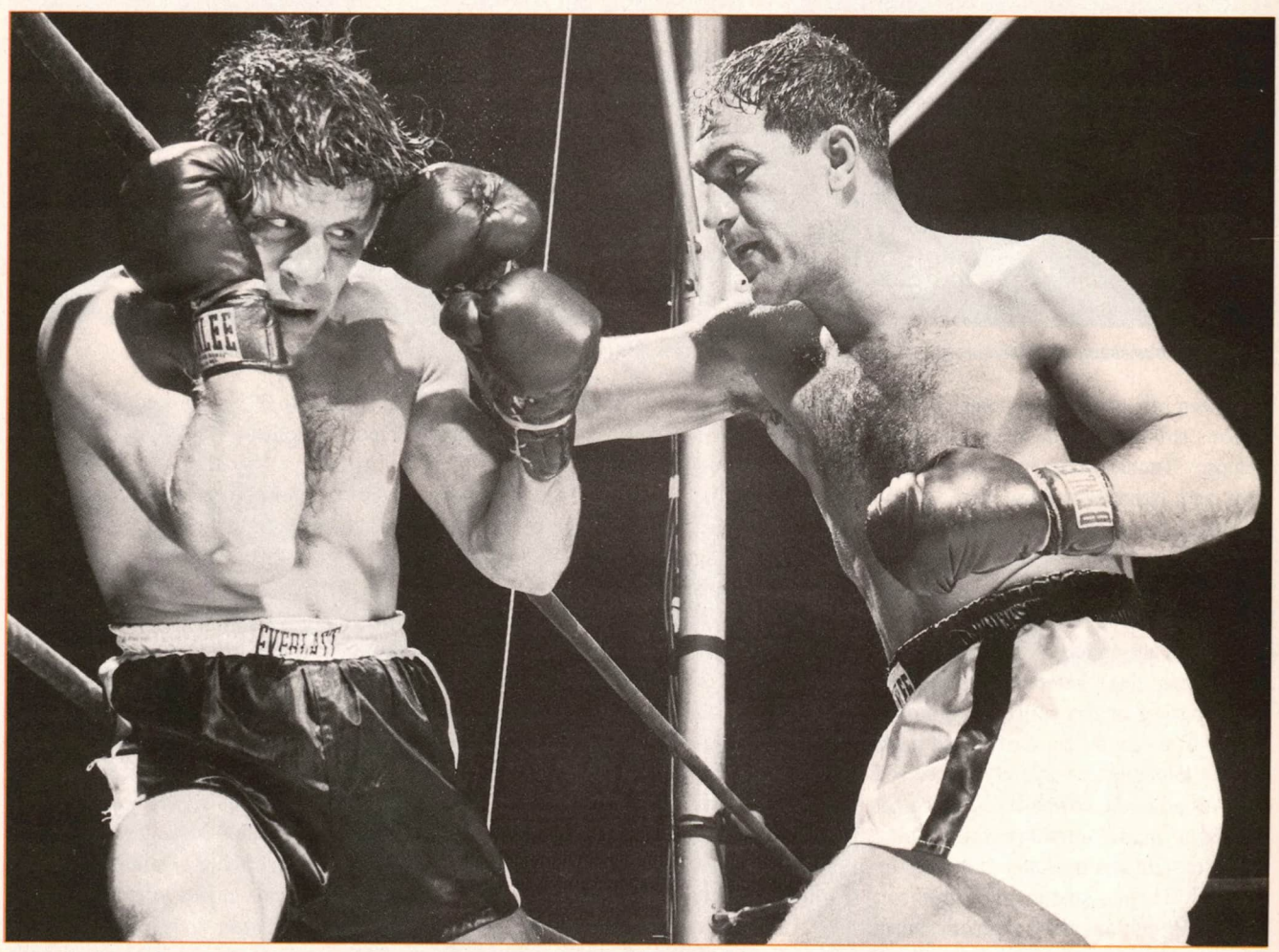
Roland LaStarza, Boxing Mechanic, Showed Up The Flaws In The Champ, But Power-Packed Rocky Proved To Be A ...

DIAMOND IN THE ROUGH

By Nat Fleischer

Boxing made its return to New York with a bang when Rocky Marciano and Roland LaStarza clashed at the Polo Grounds in "The Brockton Blockbuster's" second successful heavyweight title defense, a bout which Ruby Goldstein, the referee, halted in 1:31 of the 11th round. A surprising gathering of 44,562 persons who paid $435,817, far surpassed expectations and furnished convincing evidence that there are thousands of dyed-in-the-wool fight enthusiasts who would rather see the ringmen in the flesh than view them on the television screen if the promoters offer them something worth attending.

The fight was far from a thriller, but it did present periods of excellent boxing and hard hitting, a combination that enabled the fans to sit at the home of the Giants in a state of expectancy, something they'll continue to do, indoors or outdoors, if the promotion is a



Marciano plows a right hand through challenger LaStarza's guard during the champion's second defense of the heavyweight title. The bout drew an unexpectedly large crowd of more than 44,000 to the Polo Grounds for the off-TV match that generated a live gate of almost half-a-million dollars.

worthy one, instead of the many mismatches that have been offered in a majority of fights seen over national TV circuits.

It was not until the seventh round that the excitement mounted, a round in which Rocky the relentless started his savage punching, and thereafter the Polo Grounds affair was rather one-sided with the champ hammering his opponent at will. From then until the last pain-packed seconds, LaStarza could do little but stay on his feet and a tough time he had to do that.

The huge turnout did more to answer the query on "what's wrong with boxing" than anything the experts write. It definitely is TV's inroads on the sport. Without TV or radio and a total blackout of theater television in the vicinity of the fight, thousands who otherwise would not have paid to see the action, made their way to the Coogan's Bluff stadium. The fight was revealing in other aspects. It proved that Marciano, facing a tough, courageous, ringwise fighter, is not a one-puncher knockout artist. That he possesses a terrific sock cannot be doubted. He is a most dangerous slugger who can paralyze an opponent once he gets the range. He demonstrated that clearly in the seventh round and every round thereafter, but until the 11th, though he tossed punch after punch with effectiveness, he couldn't bring LaStarza down. We'll have to await contests with several other top-notchers before we can give him the high rating he got following his knockout of Walcott in one round.

Rocky's over-eagerness, his crudeness, his absolute lack of boxing skill, weren't the best testimonials for the man whom we have built up into a second Joe Louis. He is by far the best of the current crop of heavyweights, but that crop is so inferior to the top ranking heavyweights of the past that a hard hitter like Marciano stands out in comparison.

In the early part of the fight, for six rounds, Rocky fired shot after shot at Roland, but only about half reached the mark. So many missed that Al Weill, Rocky's manager and Charley Goldman, his chief trainer, were shocked. And so were the ringside critics.

Watching him flounder around the ring during those first six rounds in which LaStarza rolled up a big lead on the scorecards of almost every scribe and two of the judges—one of whom, Harold Barnes, had LaStarza leading five to one—we wondered how far he had progressed in boxing knowledge since his first fight with Jersey Joe Walcott. Apparently the Bay Stater had forgotten almost everything his excellent teacher, Goldman, had taught him during his long training siege. But he did eventually come out of it, and when he did, Marciano flailed savagely away against a weakening opponent whose face had become a bloody mask.

LaStarza steps on the scales for his title challenge as Marciano, his camp, commission members, and the press look on. Officially, Marciano was a quarter-pound heavier at 185. But the fact that LaStarza is wearing a robe, towel, and street shoes on the scales makes you wonder what he really weighed.

Whether it was the loss of the sixth round that Referee Goldstein took from him for fouling or because his seconds urged him to action that caused Rocky to change his style, the fact remains that a new Marciano faced LaStarza once the bell sent him out of his corner for the start of the seventh round. Now he was a tearing-in, vicious, snarling, fearless, two-fisted warrior who knew that his adversary had little left with which to hurt him.

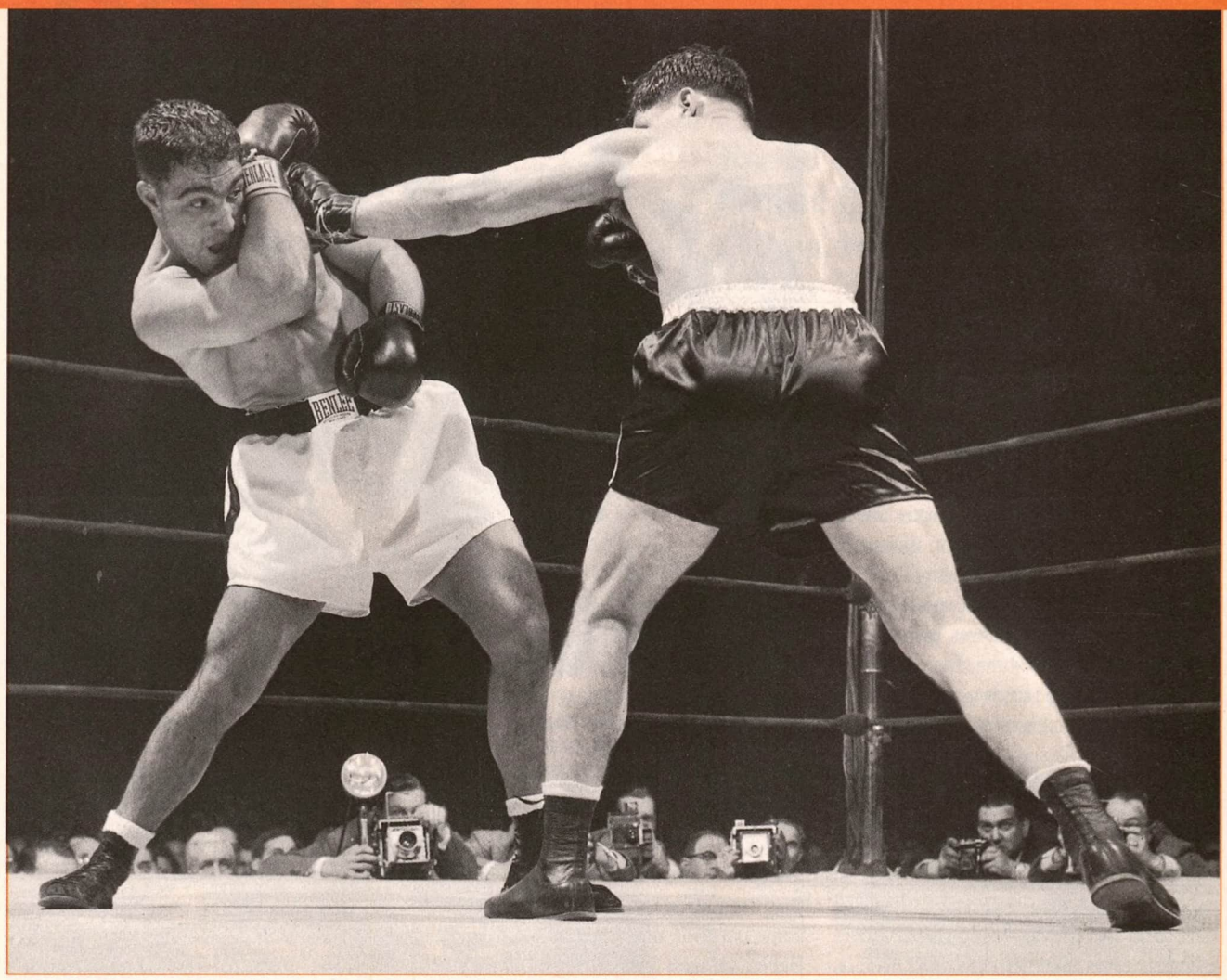
A determined look on Marciano's face indicated that he was out to score a knockout and this he would have accomplished without the aid of the referee, who prevented the clean-cut kayo by halting the contest to save Rollie from further punishment.

The seventh and 10th rounds were reminders of the bulldog spirit so often placed on display by Dempsey, but to compare Rock with either Louis or Dempsey at this stage is out of line. The Brockton Blockbuster must show more than he did against Roland.

LaStarza fought as he had promised during the early rounds. He boxed beautifully, made the champ miss, took most of Rocky's best punches with a roll so that the full effect of the bombardment couldn't be felt too much, and jabbed and hooked with effectiveness. But he was too smart to go out looking for severe punishment when he found after the eighth round that he couldn't cope with the power of Rocky's fists because his stamina was waning. He had spent his energy and was now at the mercy of a "killer."

His talents were insufficient for such an opponent once LaStarza found that he no longer could jab and hook to keep his rival off him because of an arm injury suffered in the second round. Yet he was in there fighting almost to the end. The action of the referee in finally halting the punishment seemed to be sweet music to his ear, for he nodded assent as Ruby Goldstein nudged him to his corner and told him it was all over. LaStarza was satisfied. He made no complaint. He knew he was defeated and took his medicine like the fine sportsman he is.

There was little LaStarza could do after the seventh, the round in which the tide turned. But it took the accumulative effects of 4⅓ more rounds of vicious, sustained, cruel body and face punishment, as cruel as ever was meted out to a contestant in a heavyweight title bout since Jack Dempsey



The skillful LaStarza boxed very well in the early going, making Marciano miss and countering effectively. Many felt the challenger had been unlucky not to get the decision in their first contest, which came in 1950, prior to Marciano winning the title.

whipped Jess Willard, for Marciano to turn the trick which the majority of scribes and fight fans had predicted would be finished in a jiffy. It was generally conceded that Roland couldn't last more than a few rounds and the odds of 5-1 clearly indicated the general opinion. Yet LaStarza went 10 rounds more than did the more experienced, harder hitting and cleverer veteran, Jersey Joe Walcott, in Chicago.

The defeat of LaStarza, former College of the City of New York student, did more for him than did any of the victories he had scored. It made him popular with those who hitherto had ridiculed or belittled him as a poor fighter. He didn't have what it takes to win over Marciano, but he did win the esteem of the fans.

Aside from answering the query about the effects of television on boxing, the fight will not go down into ring history as one long to be remembered. There was little that could be classified in the sensational category other than the knockdown of LaStarza with his body partially on the ropes and part on the ring apron, as was the case when Rocky knocked out Joe Louis. In this bout, as in all others to date, the Brockton slugger remained the crude, hard-socking fighter whose tremendous strength, willingness to battle, and formidable punching power make people forget his flaws. He's the kind of fighter fans will pay to see.

In short, Marciano is a diamond in the rough, but from all appearances, no amount of polishing is ever going to make him shine as a finished product of the roped square. Flaws or no flaws, he gets to his man eventually and in the manner which gains the enthusiastic support of those who pay the freight. That's the champ's greatest asset, and it pays off in huge dividends, the first of which he got when he last fought Walcott, $166,000, and the second in the LaStarza bout, $186,992.82, the largest in his earnings to date.

For the first six rounds, anyone seeing Marciano for the first time would have been justified in asking how he came to be the world heavyweight king. He was trying hard enough, but he looked like a raw novice as he missed and was bewildered every time he was tagged by LaStarza's left. He lacked the professional skill that usually is credited to a champion.

So eager was Marciano to connect in a hurry, to land the punch soporific, to prove his right to a place alongside Dempsey and Louis, that it was pathetic to see his blows land in mid-air as Roland smartly stepped aside and countered with a straight, stinging jab. The champ appeared to be trying to knock LaStarza stiff with long, looping rights and lefts, the kind of punches that seldom crash against an opponent's body with effectiveness.

Marciano rarely displayed the short, snappy, jarring punches he used at Grossinger's training camp, until warned by his seconds. He changed style in the seventh round. Not all of his punches, however, were weaklings. In between those misses, he caught Roland with many ponderous blows to the body, jolting rights under the heart, and stiff wallops to the face.

But it was not until the seventh round that his passionate eagerness to rush pell-mell and toss punches haphazardly left him. Starting with that round, he became the real champ. He gained full control of himself. It was his biggest and best round other than the final session.

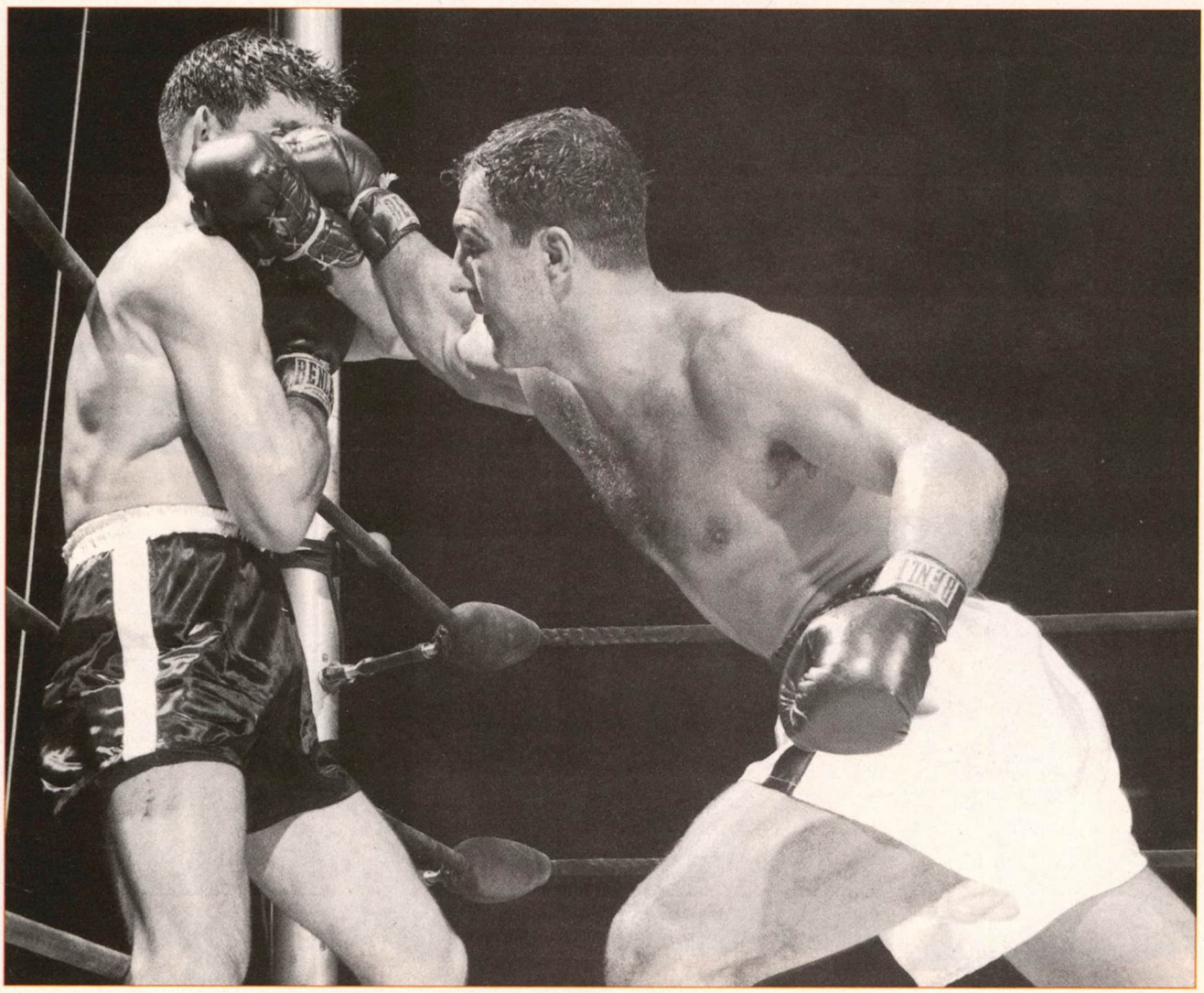
Rocky inflicted more punishment on his rival in the seventh than in any other round. He fired many heavy, jarring blows into the body of Roland, but he couldn't bring him down.

But Rocky was now the boss of the situation. He relieved Roland of the role, never again for the challenger to regain it. From that round to the finish, the spectators saw a cave man battering a willing opponent who had lost his vim and his boxing skill and was quickly losing his stamina. The champion, meanwhile, was coming on, full power ahead, to clear the deck for the "kill."

LaStarza was game as he took solid wallops and powerful hooks, but gameness alone was of no avail now that Rocky Marciano had become the fighter that had gained for him the praise of public and press. Victory was within his grasp and he was fully aware of it. The swarthy, superbly conditioned Brockton slugger, started a chopping process on his foe and never let up until Referee Goldstein shoved him aside, to halt what had turned from a tame fight into a slaughter of the challenger.

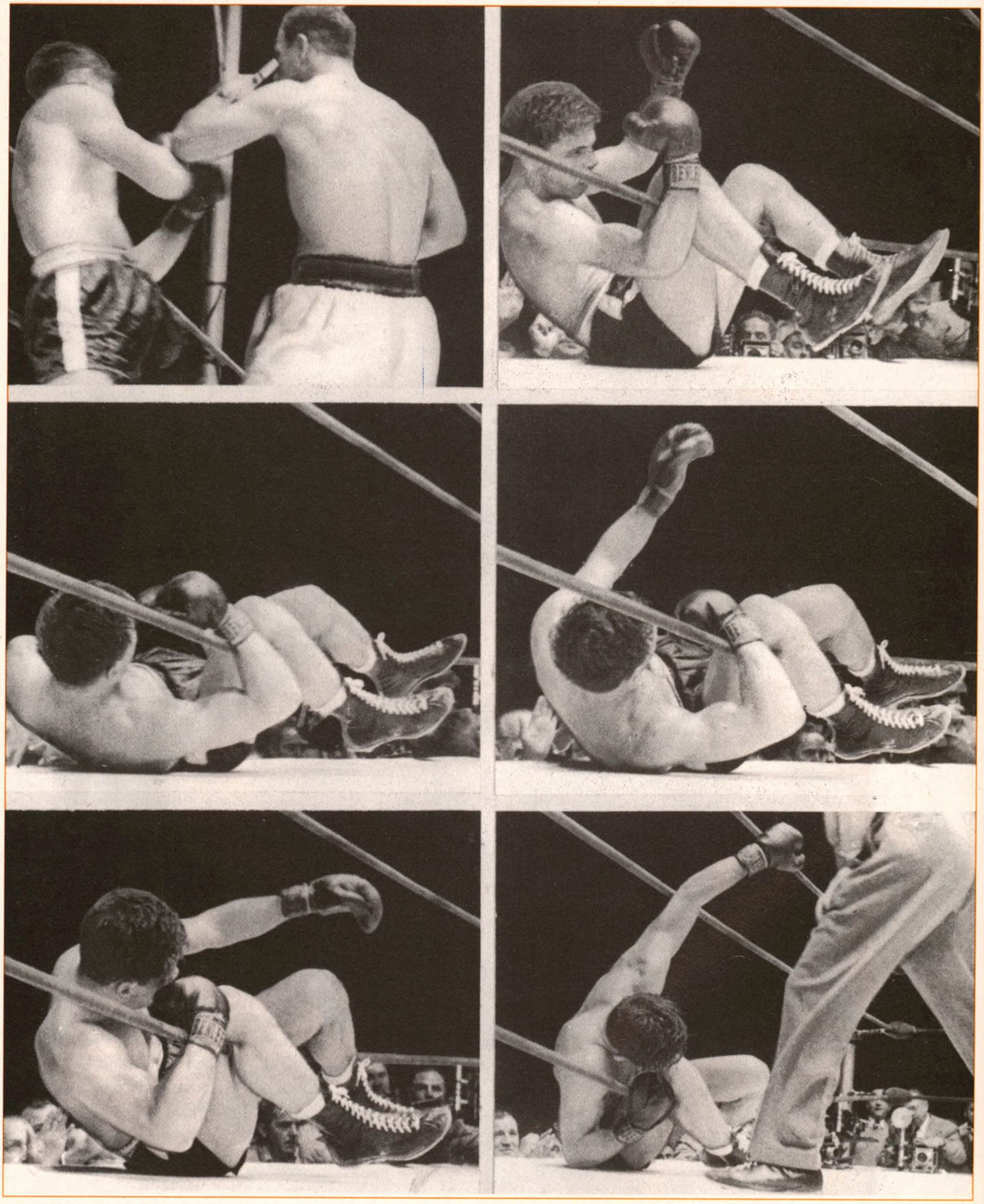
The 26-year-old Bronx challenger, one of the few college bred heavyweights to fight for world honors, was bent on staying the 15 rounds if he couldn't win by a knockout, but it became evident to him and his aides that the end was in sight once Rocky succeeded in penetrating Roland's defense. By degrees he weakened La Starza to make the New Yorker easy prey.

The champion went to work after ref Goldstein had taken the sixth round from him and from there on it was easy for him and dreadful for LaStarza. Rocky had come to the realization that Roland had no weapon but cleverness and went to work on him. And once he began to toss his blows to all parts of the body, poor Roland became a defenseless victim. He tried often to strike back, but couldn't, and the few times he did, the punches were mere taps compared to what he was receiving from the champion.

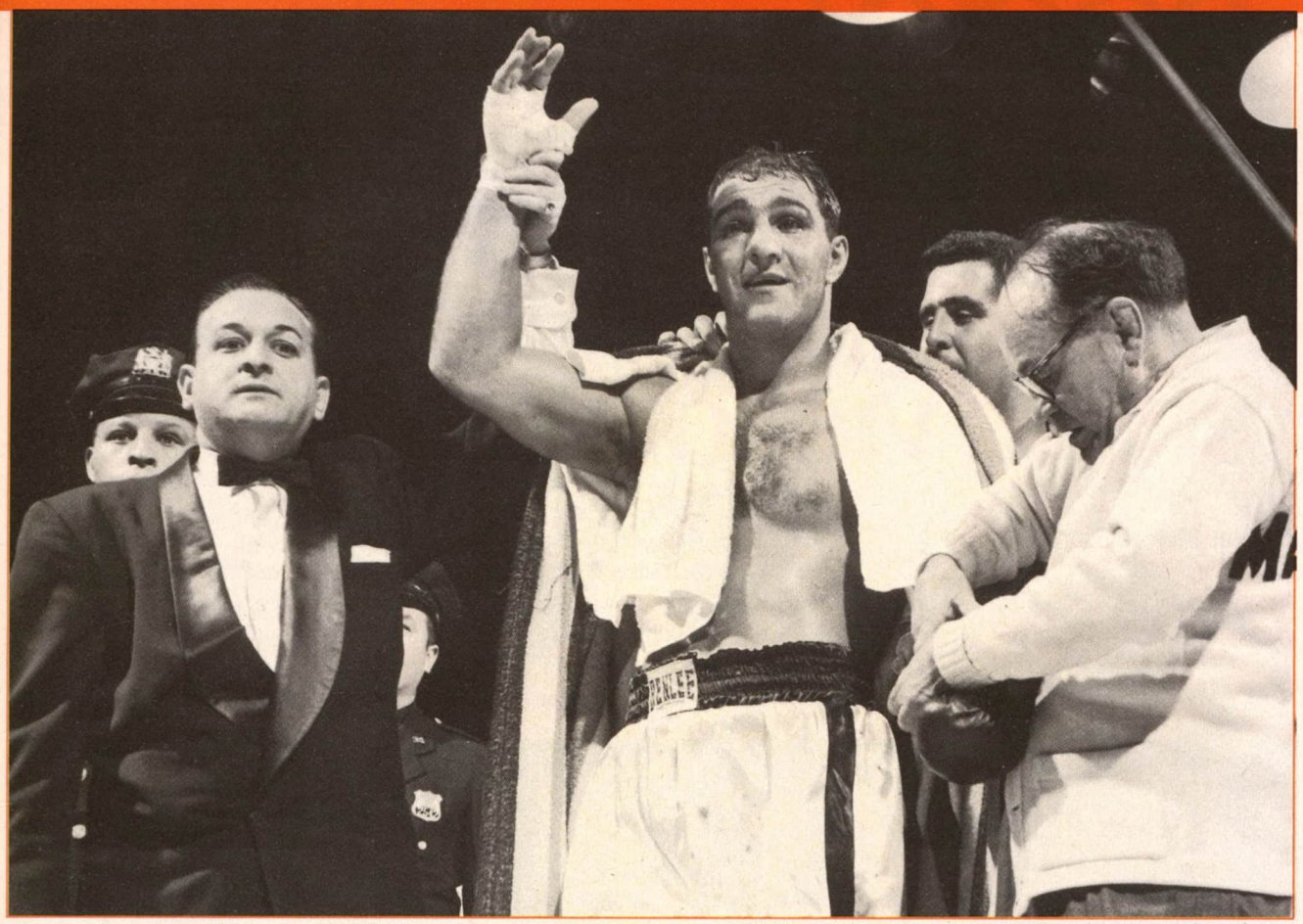


Following a tongue-lashing from his trainer between the sixth and seventh rounds, Marciano shortened up on his punches and began to connect with solid shots. After that, LaStarza gradually fell behind as The Rock hammered him unmercifully.

That seventh round was the turning point of the fight. Once in that round Rocky had LaStarza in a corner and was battering him, but Roland succeeded in wheeling about and getting away. But before that happened, Marciano kept digging deeply into Roland's stomach, forcing him to wince from pain several times. It was a round in which Marciano inflicted so much damage that his New York opponent never got over it. He was so weakened from the punishment that he became a



This series of photos shows LaStarza as he collapsed under a heavy barrage of blows delivered by Marciano in the 11th round. Seconds later, referee Ruby Goldstein halted the fight to spare the challenger from further punishment.



"The winner and still champion ... Rocky Marciano." Ring announcer Johnny Addie holds Marciano's arm aloft following the LaStarza victory as trainer Goldman removes his gloves. Marciano was paid more than $186,000 for his second defense.

mark thereafter for all that Marciano could toss at him.

Then followed another round in which Roland took a shellacking. He tried to retaliate with jabs and hooks, but they were weak and had no effect on Rocky, who kept up a bombardment. With blood streaming from nose and from his mouth, La Starza looked a sight. He also was bleeding from a cut on the side of the right eye, and when the bell sounded, a weary, rubberlegged challenger walked to his corner.

The two rounds following were repetitious of the previous one. With powerful blows the thud of which resounded around the ringside, Marciano kept up one continuous bombardment through the ninth, 10th, and as much as the 11th as was necessary.

When Roland came out for the 11th round, his face was red and messy. He was tired. He was a picture of distress, but he displayed the courage of a true battler. Few in his condition would have cared to face Marciano for another round.

Many at the ringside recalled the case of Jersey Joe Walcott in Chicago and they thought he was better off doing what he did instead of taking the licking LaStarza had received and would continue to get until the bout ended. But there was no quitting in Roland. He went out to carry on, but he didn't have to wait much longer.

Shortly after the bell had sounded, Rocky smashed a right to the jaw. He followed with several lefts and rights to the head and sent Roland over the middle rope with his knees rested on the ropes and body on the apron of the ring.

Dazed as he was, LaStarza managed to get back and up at the count of five. Ruby Goldstein, forgetting that in a title fight the automatic eight-count is not required, kept up the count to nine before he permitted Rocky to sail in again for the finishing punches. The extra count didn't harm any, though some writers thought that Rocky might have scored a clean knockout had he been permitted to resume activities as soon as LaStarza got to his feet.

Battered, with the claret covering his face and chest, LaStarza walked away from the ropes, but Rocky gave no quarter. He tossed rights and lefts to LaStarza's body and head, and when La Starza was unable to offer any defense, referee Goldstein stepped in and halted the now one-sided fight in 1:31 of the 11th round. Goldstein made his judicious move to the complete satisfaction of Commissioner Bob Christenberry and spectators. He acted for the best interests of all.

Marciano is still the unbeaten champion and so he will remain until some husky, granite-hard city or country youth who can hit like a steam hammer and can take punishment, arrives on the scene.

The Polo Grounds fight was exceedingly well handled. The IBC and the New York Commission did a fine job in this fistic extravaganza. The judging and the refereeing were excellent. Goldstein's work was on a par with the majority of his other good work as the third man in major New York contests.

Goldstein had Marciano ahead with 7 to 3 prior to the knockout; Judge Arthur Susskind's card showed 6 to 4 for Marciano; Judge Harold Barnes had it 5 to 6. My tally was 6 to 4 for Marciano. ■

ROCKY REMEMBERED

June 19, 1954

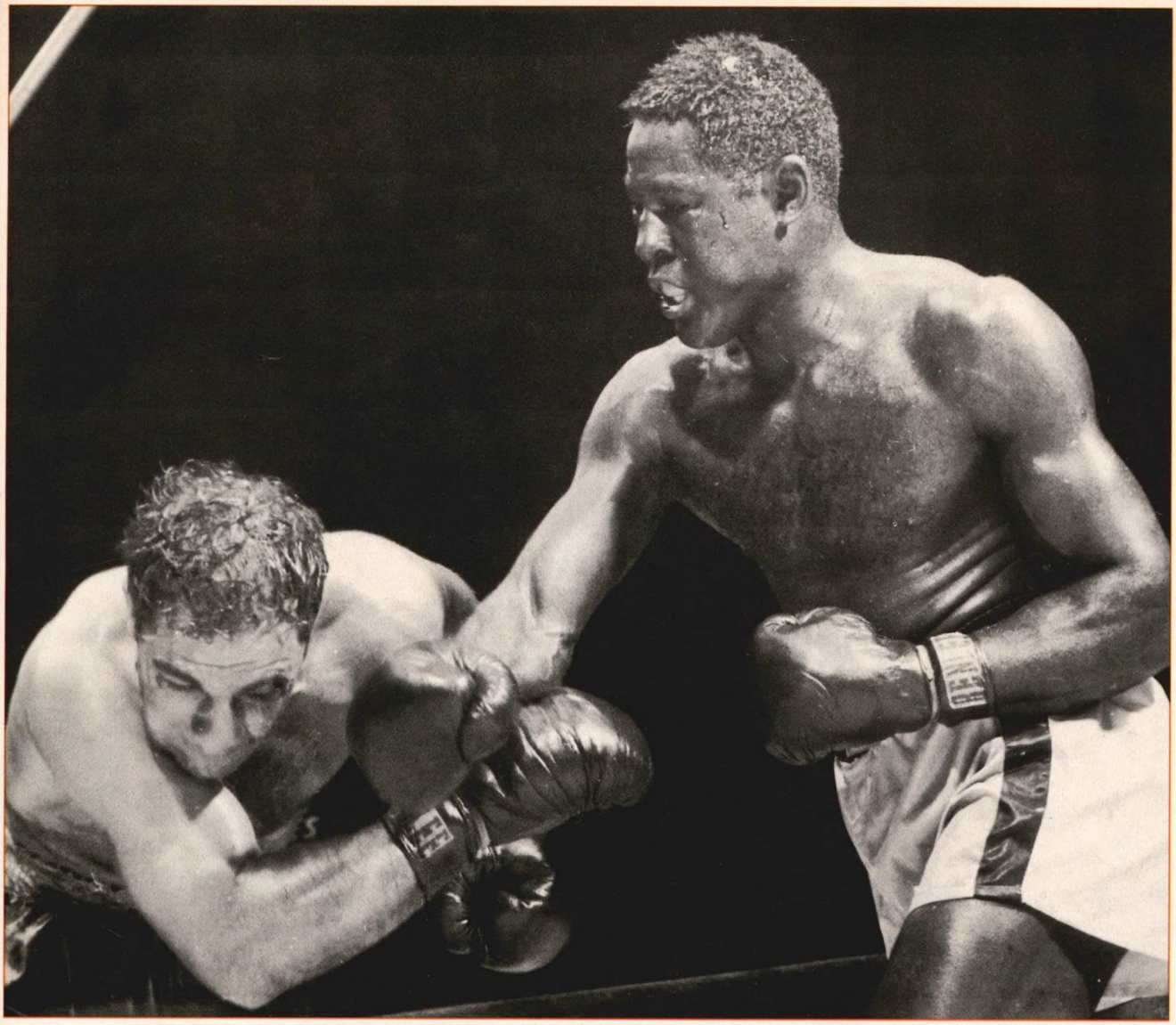
Charles Magnificent In Defeat, But Marciano Just Too Powerful

FINAL ROUNDS BRING VICTORY TO ROCKY

By Nat Fleischer

Ezzard Charles, like many predecessors, failed to regain the world heavyweight title in his bout with Rocky Marciano before a gathering of 47,585 persons who paid $543,092 to see their contest at the Yankee Stadium, but he came almost as close to winning it as did James J. Corbett in his memorable battle with James J. Jeffries on May 11, 1900, at Coney Island, when Gentleman Jim was halted in the 23rd round. In that affair, Corbett was well in the lead when the knockout blow was delivered, but in the Stadium gory mill, it was in the last few rounds that Marciano pulled the chestnuts out of the fire and gained the points to

Marciano, blood leaking from his nose and left eye, nails Charles with right hand during their breathtaking slugfest at Yankee Stadium. Many had questioned the challenger's courage going into the fight, but Charles fought so gallantly, that opinion was forever repudiated.



The fight was a brutal give-and-take affair, with Charles dishing out almost as much punishment as he absorbed. He aimed many of his blows, such as the one pictured, at Marciano's cut left eye, but in those days championship bouts were rarely stopped due to cuts.

place him in the winning column.

The battle in the arena that Jake Ruppert built, exploded two myths: It for all time put at rest the contention of the fight fans and scribes that Charles is a timid fighter, fearful of being hurt, and that Rocky can knock out any opponent he can hit squarely on the chin.

No fighter ever engaged in a heavyweight title bout who displayed more raw, determined courage, fighting stamina, the will to carry on despite tremendous odds, than did Charles. It was a primeval, desperately fought, clouting, savage brawl in which as the fight advanced from the 10th round to the finish, it became apparent that the heavier-socking Marciano would emerge the victor over the scientific, more-experienced challenger, who was trying to regain the crown he had lost to Jersey Joe Walcott.

The odds that favored Rocky, 18-5 at ring time, were due mainly to the contention that Charles was a timid fighter and would fold up under the attacks of his adversary. But to the astonishment of even his greatest admirers and supporters, Ezzard, with the tag of "timid" hung on to him because of the number of contests in which he had failed to display the full assets he possesses as a first-class fighting man, put forth such an exhibition of valorous fighting that the meaning of fear must forever be eliminated when discussing his career. Against a fighter who knows only how to toss lethal weapons without backing away from his opponent, Charles stilled any doubt about his valor and earned the plaudits of the multitude as a true fighting man.

He was magnificent in defeat. He left the ring a tired, battered, bloody battler, but in defeat, he was more glorious than ever he appeared in his best triumph.

As for Marciano, he was even more tired than Charles, had claret flowing freely from a cut over the eye and from his nose, and though he bombarded Charles with punches that ordinarily should have put an end to the fray long before the 15th, Rocky couldn't even bring his opponent down despite the terrific power behind those wallops.

So exhausted was Charles that he could scarcely stand on his feet during the last three rounds, yet he fought back viciously

The right uppercut was one of Marciano's best weapons, and he staggered Charles on several occasions with such a punch, but couldn't put him on the floor. Some old-timers reached all the way back to the Jim Jeffries-Tom Sharkey fight of 1898 for a comparison.

after regaining a little of his strength and made things almost as uncomfortable for Rocky at times as Marciano did for him. Each was repeatedly shaken and staggered but carried on.

In the final two rounds, Charles, despite his weariness and the clouts he received to face and body, punches that often landed with battering-ram force, put everything he possessed to try to end the bout by a knockout. That was the only way he could win after Rocky started his uphill battle.

But in Marciano, Charles found an opponent who could take all, and it required the courage of a fighting bulldog for Charles to make the stand he did in the final round against such odds. Rocky knew he had been in a fight. He fought the toughest boxer he had ever met and had his toughest battle, one he will always remember.

He had never gone beyond 13 rounds in prior contests and had never had such punishment inflicted on him as in this bout. It was something new for him, but he met the situation as a fighting champion should and emerged the victor, though not by too much of a margin, considering what had been expected.

The judging of the three officials and that of the several hundred scribes, the biggest number ever to report a world championship fight, didn't differ much. Referee Ruby Goldstein gave the fight to Rocky, 8-5-2; Judge Artie Aidala had it for the champion, 9-5-1, and Judge Harold Barnes 8-6-1 for Marciano. My count was 9-5-1 for Rocky.

The general impression prior to the fight was that if the bout went the distance, Marciano couldn't win—he would lose on points. Rocky fooled 'em by proving something we had hoped to see—whether he could take it from a clever boxer who also can hit, and carry on to the finish without losing the decision.

This he accomplished by blasting his way from behind in action-packed rounds that kept the spectators in a state of suspense and awe until the final clang of the gong, when a roar of applause greeted both champion and challenger.

Raw, red courage was never more exemplified in any heavyweight championship fight than in this, with both sides displaying it. Old-timers who had seen the Jeffries-Sharkey battle at Coney Island more than half-a-century ago, compared the courage on exhibition at the Yankee Stadium to that which Sharkey and Jeff displayed in their affair.

Rocky and Charles caught blow after blow, powerful haymaker wallops, the real devastating kind, without taking a backward step. Occasionally Rocky staggered Ezzard, and as frequently, Charles shook up the champ, but each kept his feet on the ground and refused to go down.

It was that kind of a hair-raising, thrill-

Despite Charles' best efforts, he couldn't stop Marciano's relentless attack. The defending champion was rocked on numerous occasions, but kept coming, winging wide haymakers as he advanced. Even so, he needed a big finish to retain the title via a unanimous 15-round decision.

ing, savage mill from the fifth round up. It was a contest in which the challenger did what he had promised while in training—give everything he had in an effort to win back the throne or at least to remain on his feet until the final clang of the gong.

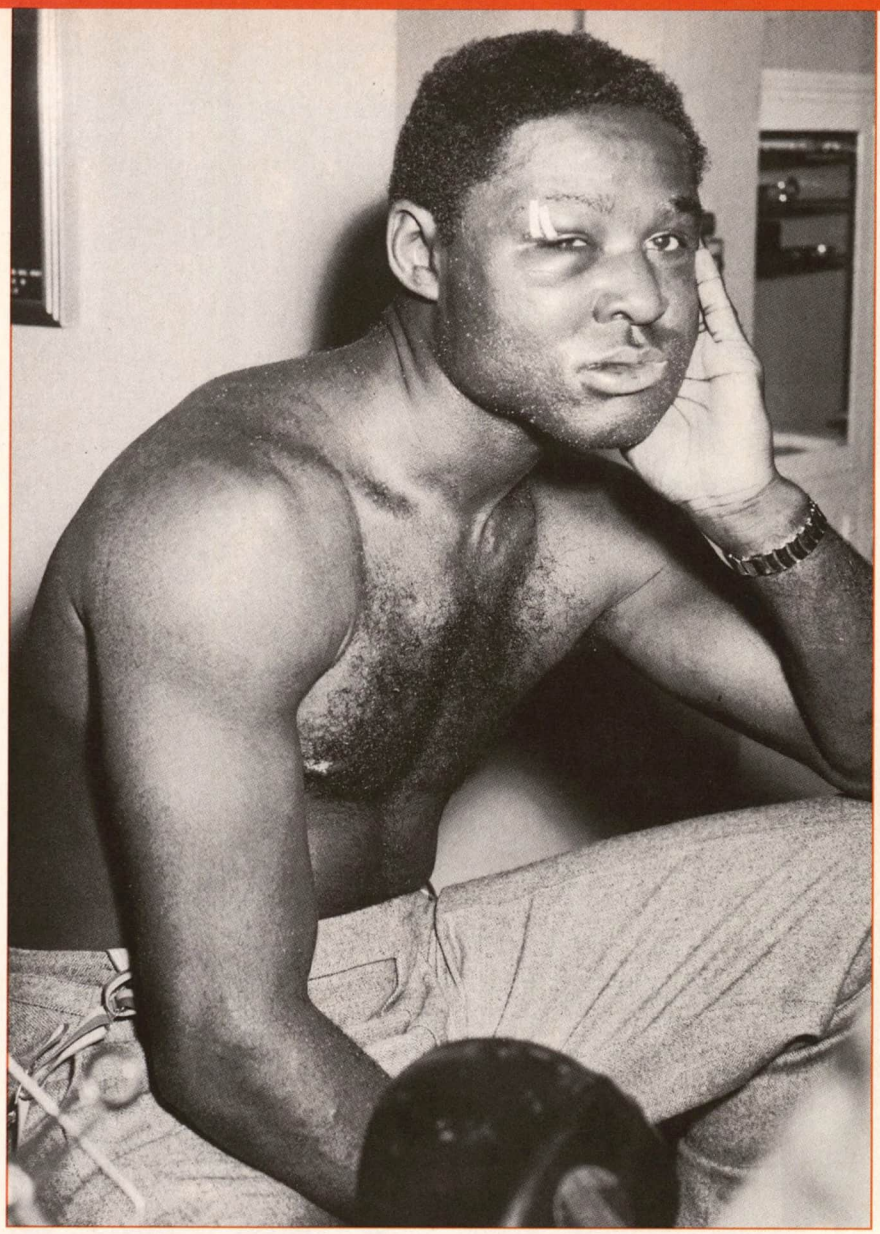
But the challenger in my opinion, though he endeared himself to the fans by his wonderful performance of sheer determination, didn't fight the battle he should have—one that was mapped out for him by his handlers in camp. With a big lead in the early rounds, he could have maintained the advantage had he boxed more instead of mixing it, especially before the fifth round. He took punishment that he did not have to absorb. He might have won the fight under such procedure. He had rolled up a good sized lead, but took too much of a gamble on exchanges with his iron-fisted opponent, who definitely had more on the ball in that respect than did Charles.

Even in the final rounds, when Rocky was at his best tossing blow after blow with devastating effect to face and body, wallops that caused Ezzard's face to be punched out of shape, Charles caused the champ to miss many blows simply by sticking his left out and tossing Rocky off-balance.

As savage as was the battle, it was cleanly fought with only one warning coming to Rocky in the eighth round.

As was expected, based on the training procedure, Charles depended mostly on his left hook to the body, a punch he frequently used in the early rounds most effectively, while the champion played havoc with his right. It was a right to the left side of the face in the fourth round that sent Rocky's head back with a snap and that was followed by another blow that cut a deep gash over the left eye.

At times the blood blinded the titleholder, who kept wiping the claret away with his moist glove. Thereafter, in every



This is how Charles looked the day after the fight, when the New York State Athletic Commission's doctor examined him. The medical authorities said that the defeated challenger had escaped serious injury and would be fit for a rematch in September, less than three month after their first encounter.

round, Charles played for that damaged spot and many times he landed vicious punches that brought the blood out in spurts.

But the amazing champion kept coming in, most often the aggressor, hurling pulverizing clouts back at his adversary in an effort to end the bout and his agony, but without success. That the 32-year-old Ezzard could stand the gaff for the full 15 rounds was even a greater surprise than the fact that the defending 29-year-old titleholder couldn't put his opponent away. Rocky did, however, succeed in wearing out his antagonist, though Marciano was almost as weary as his opponent at the end.

With right eye puffed, a mouse under it, claret flowing from his mouth, and a lump that was the size of an egg on the left side of his jaw, Ezzard absorbed all the punishment meted out to him without going down even once, though twice it appeared, as his head was lifted high by right uppercuts, that he would be down.

Twice also he had Rocky on the verge of a knockdown, so bitter was the battle fought. Charles gave it everything he had, but it was not enough. More than once his knees were wobbly, but so were those of the champion. In the 11th, 13th, and 14th rounds, sessions in which he appeared most hurt, he lashed out with left hooks and straight rights that caused Rocky momentarily to stop in his tracks. He beat the champ to the punch, made him miss as he hurled smashing blows to the injured optic, and then had to hold to catch his breath before letting loose again. Yet he wouldn't give in. He stayed and fought in the true spirit of a fighting man. This was to be as he expressed it to me in camp, "probably my last chance to regain the crown and I'll go down fighting or get my title back." Though he didn't win back his crown and didn't go down, he certainly fought to the final drop of the hat.

The age old dictum that they never come back still holds, but in the attempt to break the jinx, Charles made a noble effort, one that will go down into ring history. So unlike was Ezzard's performance against Marciano as that which haunted him after his cautious bid to regain the title from old Jersey Joe Walcott, one couldn't believe it was the same, but older, Ezz who was making things so uncomfortable for the defending champion.

But the battle with Charles was more rugged, more punishing, and more of an uncertainty. There were times when Ezzard's chances of victory looked extremely bright, as bright as they were for Walcott, but power triumphed in the long run and Marciano apparently had the advantage in that line.

The fight, instead of putting Charles out of the running so far as a contender is concerned, strengthened his hold. Though the general impression seems to be that Nino Valdes and Don Cockell should get a chance to see what they can do against "The Brockton Blockbuster," one cannot shove Ezz to the sidelines after his showing. He still must be ranked the number-one challenger. He has earned still another shot at Rocky, according to Jim Norris, who figures that such fight in September will outdraw any other he can arrange, and the public will agree with that.

The defeat of Charles did not affect the heavyweight situation adversely. Instead of cutting down the number of contenders, it gives Norris a chance to put on several lucrative heavyweight bouts. Now he has a chance to pit Charles again against Marciano in September and arrange two other good matches—the winner of the Valdes-Hurricane Jackson bout against

Don Cockell, if such can be made with the winner of that contest to fight the Marciano-Charles September victor in a February bout. Thus Ezzard's valiant performance has added new interest to the division and has bolstered boxing, worldwide.

The Yankee Stadium fight followed the pattern each fighter had set for himself, except that the champ hadn't expected his rival to attack with the viciousness he displayed. Ezzard was by far away the best all-around ringman Marciano had ever faced, a challenger who used every weapon at his command, from ring cleverness and splendid maneuvering to brainwork. But the thing he couldn't do was to outfight and outpunch The Rock—the two factors that enabled the titleholder to retain his crown.

Charles often sewed up Rocky and only once in the entire 15 rounds did he permit the champ to corner him or to pin him against the ropes. Throughout the fight Charles kept as near to the ring center as he could, thus providing himself with protection against shots that could be tossed at him at close range without getting the opportunity to retaliate.

When Marciano got in close, on a number of occasions he clipped Ezz with short right uppercuts that jarred the challenger from head to foot. These were Rocky's most effective wallops. They were the punches that enabled Marciano to come from behind, first tie the count, and then by degrees pull away as the fight progressed despite the attacks of Ezz.

In several rounds, the sixth, 10th, 12th, and 14th, which I gave to Rocky by a 2 to 0 points margin, that worked with perfection.

In the 12th and 14th, twice Charles suddenly found himself defenseless against a barrage of rights, a vicious barrage that rocked his head, caused him to sway, get into a clinch, and then just as suddenly, he broke away and started a barrage of his own. But Rocky wouldn't be halted. As Ezz tired, Marciano leaped forth to resume his attack and snapped the challenger's head back as right after right hit the mark.

Had Rocky the assets possessed by Charles, he couldn't have missed scoring a knockout on those occasions, but he showed his crudeness time and again despite the courage and battering ram blows he exhibited. He had several golden opportunities, but lacked the science to take full advantage of them. Thus Ezzard, at times almost on the point of collapse, was enabled to keep going and to hand out punishment to his rival, which, considering conditions, was amazing.

The ninth round was the turning point of the fight. It was the session that marked the end of Charles' temporary reign over The Brockton Blockbuster. It was the round in which Rocky took over, never again on my score sheet to relinquish the upper hand, small at times as it was. He had the challenger going in that session, but let him wiggle off the hook by becoming extremely wild, tossing punches haphazardly, letting openings go by, and throwing his bombs either over the shoulder of the challenger or in mid-air. He did inflict much cruel punishment in that round, as he did in every succeeding frame, but he couldn't connect with a knockout wallop.

In the 12th round, Charles' legs indicated weariness. They had become weakened. Here was another chance for Rocky to connect with the telling blow, but he couldn't get it over, and again Charles had a reprieve. He evaded many of the tosses that should have landed, merely by a little cleverness, leg weary as he was.

Marciano won a great, colorful, thrilling battle, the best I have seen in a heavyweight championship fight in many years, and no matter what his shortcomings, he again proved that he is a mighty tough hombre to beat.

Boxing has profited by the Marciano-Charles fight. Our hats are off to both boxers.

For a world title contest, the scoring of the fight was pretty close so far as the experts were concerned. Few came far away from the official tally of the three officials.

A few scribes, among them two New Yorkers, figured Charles had won and several among the hundreds at the ringside gave Rocky only one-round margin, but more than 90 percent of the scores were about the same, varying only one frame here and there.

The round-by-round records present an interesting study. The three officials, viewing the fight from as many different angles, were in agreement on eight rounds but in absolute agreement only four times. They gave Charles the lead in the fourth frame and each handed him two points. They also scored the sixth, 11th, and 13th rounds the same, all for Marciano by two points. Although each gave the first to Charles and the ninth, 10th, and 15th to Marciano, there was no unanimity of opinion on the points tally.

The 10th session showed the biggest variation. Referee Goldstein gave it to Marciano by one point, but judge Aidala and judge Barnes figured that The Brockton Blockbuster had gained the frame by two and three points, respectively, although normally, under the Eagan system of scoring points in New York, three are allotted only when a knockdown is scored or a fighter has his opponent on the verge of a knockout. Neither of which appeared in those frames, since on each occasion Charles came back with a good flurry after being battered about the head and body severely.

In the other seven rounds they didn't see eye-to-eye. The third and 12th had wide spreads. In each of these rounds, the officials tallied it one for Rocky, one even, and the third for Ezz. Barnes gave the third to Marciano and the 12th to Charles. It was the opposite with Aidala. Goldstein called the third to Marciano and the 12th even

In the second round, Marciano received the vote of Goldstein and the others gave it to Charles. In the fifth session, Goldstein gave Rocky the round with two points; Aidala gave it to Marciano by one point and Barnes called that round even.

Yet at the finish of the fight, the scorecards of the three looked pretty much alike. All of which proves that it is all a matter of how much one allots for aggressiveness, hard hitting, counterpunching, and other assets. But no matter how one looked at this fight, it is difficult to see how any other decision could have been reached but that Rocky Marciano had retained his championship.

While Charles, a fine sportsman and gallant loser, offered no alibis for his defeat, there are those who wonder just how Ezzard's chances of ultimately winning may have been affected by the punch that clipped him behind the ear after the bell ended the sixth round. Was that punch the real turning point of the fight? ■

September 17, 1954

Rocky Overcomes Split Nose To Stop Charles

MARCIANO'S PUNCH DECISIVE

By Dan Daniel

After Rocky Marciano had knocked out Ezzard Charles in the eighth round in Yankee Stadium on the night of Friday, September 17, Al Weill, manager of the world's heavyweight champion, appeared to make The Rock's program quite simple.

"First we take Don Cockell of England, then Nino Valdes of Cuba," said Weill. "We have cleaned out the field of contenders in the United States, and now our plans must be international."

It sounded much too downright and forthright. In the past, Weill inevitably had delayed decisions on the plans of his titleholder. Now he was suggesting and formulating, and one wondered if he had gone so far as to set a timetable for these fights. Weill made no mention of Archie Moore. That is definitely out.

Asked if Marciano would go to London to meet Cockell, Weill replied, "No, the title is here and it weighs a lot. It is much too heavy to tote all the way to England.

"If Cockell, who has come over, as far as Seattle, to fight Harry Matthews twice, wants a shot at the championship, he will have to come to the United States. Where this fight would be is for Jim Norris to decide."

Asked if the Valdes fight would come as soon as February, in Miami, where it would get considerable patronage from Cuban fight fans, Weill replied, "I have Valdes in mind. But time and place have not been discussed. Valdes did a good job stopping Hurricane Jackson, and is in line for a chance at Marciano."

Weill's mention of Valdes marked the first time Weill had discussed the Cuban as a possible opponent of Marciano. Up to that time, those in the know had felt that Weill never would get down to serious discussion of a chance for Valdes because the Valdes camp was not very chummy with Weill.

Valdes not only has stopped Jackson, but also has beaten Ezzard Charles. He is big and strong and his chance must come now, or never. He is taking on years.

Cockell, conqueror of Roland LaStarza in London, earned the right to fight

for the title with his decisive victory over the New York heavy. It might be pointed out that Cockell was knocked out by Randy Turpin in 11 rounds in 1952, and failed to last four with Jimmy Slade in 1951.

The general impression is that the somewhat lardy Cockell would be belted out early by The Rock. But you never can tell. Marciano now is confronted with quite a physical and mental problem.

Marciano stopped Charles in the eighth because he just had to end the fight then and there. His nose had been cracked open in the sixth round, and as the eighth got under way, he suffered a cut over the left eye, just as he had in the June fight with Charles.

Weill said that he had warned The Rock to stop Charles in the eighth, or Weill would be forced to end the fight to save Rocky from serious injury. That nose looked like a walnut that had been cracked in half, the eye looked bad too. In addition, Marciano had been bleeding from the nose almost from the start.

"When Marciano came back to his corner after the seventh, I said, 'Rocky, this is it. You have got to stop him now. If you don't I will have to stop the fight.'" Would Weill have stopped the fight? I don't think so.

Marciano said, "The fight was not as easy as it looked." Then he gave the mike to Weill.

In short, Marciano henceforth will be handicapped, and his opponents certainly will not be mentally hobbled by the fact that the champion is a quick and copious bleeder. To begin with, Rocky will have to have a plastic surgery job on his schnozz. Those eye cuts also may interest the doctors.

To be a quick and heavy bleeder is a tremendous handicap for a fighter. Years ago, a scrapper could bleed and bleed some more, just so long as he wasn't hurt. But nowadays there is an inclination to stop fights in which there is too heavy a flow of what used to be called "claret."

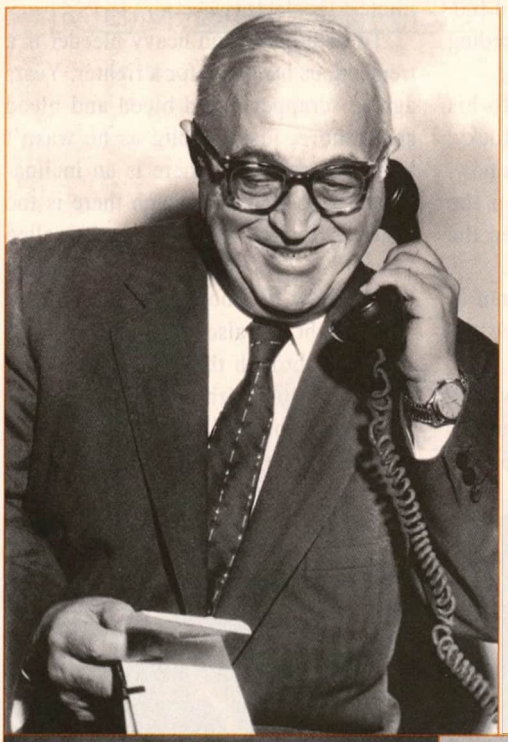
The flow of blood made The Rock a messy sight. He also was having trouble in seeing through the blood, and it just had to be the eighth. Marciano was strong enough to call his round.

Before we go into a discussion of the

A desperate Marciano crashes a right into Charles' jaw in the seventh round of their rematch. With his nose injury threatening to terminate the bout, "The Brockton Blockbuster" had no choice but to end the fight in a hurry, which he did at 2:36 of the eighth round.

fight, what about Charles? He has had more chances—three of them—to regain the heavyweight title than came to any other former champion. Jim Corbett had two shots, Jim Jeffries, Jack Dempsey, and Joe Louis one each

The hex that follows every former titleholder in his quest of recovery fastened itself on Charles as early as the second round. He won the feeler-out first, and from then on was a beaten boxer.



Where can Charles go from the spot on which he finds himself? He is finished as a contender. If he stays in the ring, it will have to be as a trialhorse. How much could he get out of that?

After the fight, Marciano said, "It was my easiest contest. Charles never hurt me. Not one bit. He sliced my nose with an elbow, he cut my eye with a butt."

However, it looked very much as if both the nose and the eye had been ripped by punches. Nor did Rocky's dressing room statements stand up in the light of what he said in front of the Hollywood Bowl mike.

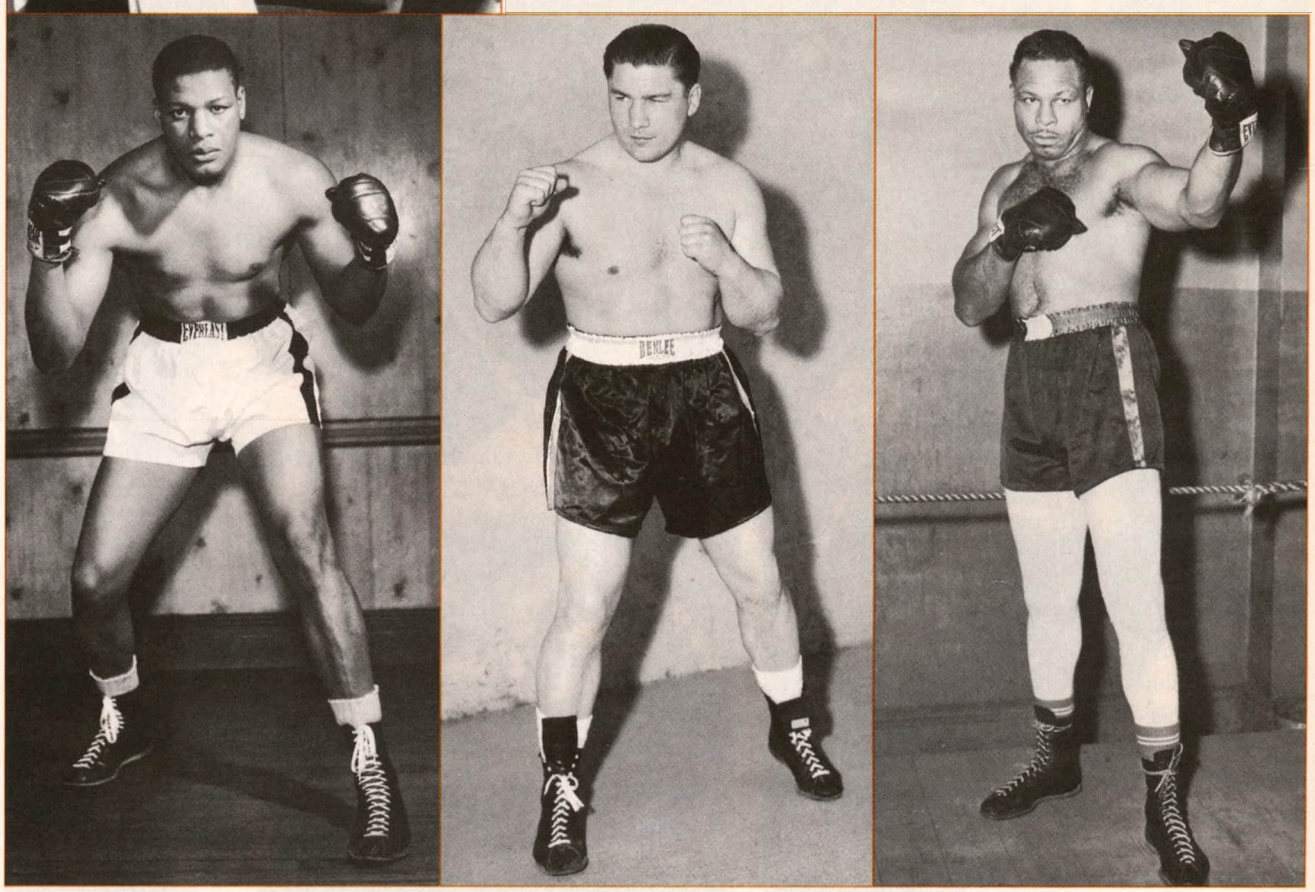
It may be true that Charles did not hurt Marciano enough to bother the champion. But rip him the challenger did, and some of those rights to the jaw did not look like love taps.

New York did not do itself proud in supporting this second fight. However, two postponements, and threatening, raw weather on the night of the shindig, hurt the gate tremendously. The fight was witnessed by 34,330 paying guests, who turned in $352,654 gross at the gate. The net was $301,520, a sad disappointment after prediction that the contest might approach the million-dollar level.

Out of the gate and theater TV, the champion got an estimated $175,000. Charles drew down about $88,000.

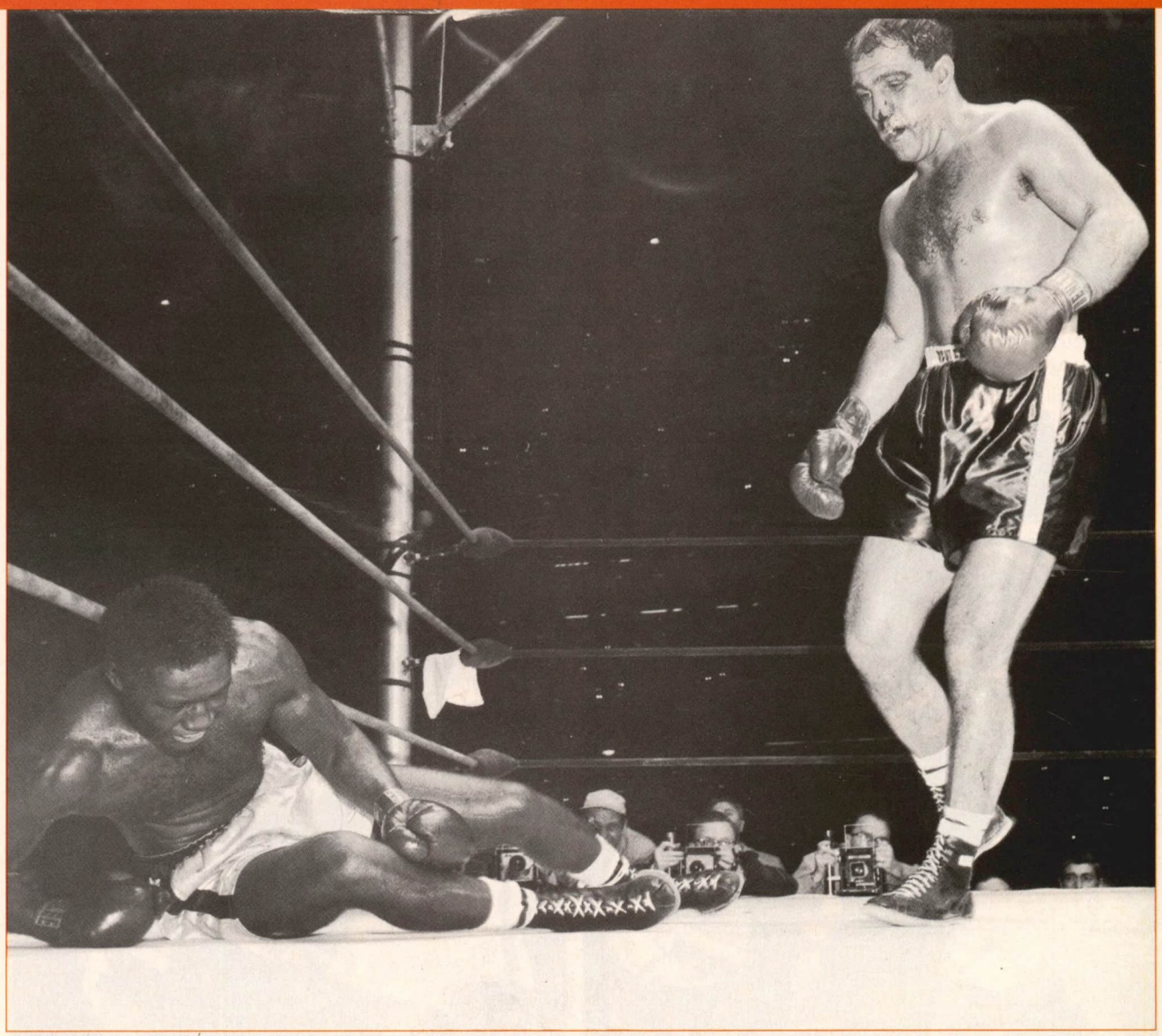
The Rock's fourth defense of the crown he won from Jersey Joe Walcott in 13 rounds in 1952 was a typical Marciano job. He hurt a lot, he missed a lot, and he was too good for the other man.

Charles has been accused by some captious critics of taking his payday and



Following Marciano's second victory over Charles, the champ's manager, Al Weill (top), listed Cuba's Nino Valdes (far left) and England's Don Cockell (middle) as the next two challengers to get a crack at The Rock. At that time, light heavyweight champion Archie Moore (right) wasn't part of Weill's itinerary, but that would change due to public demand for a Moore fight.

Following a decent opening round by the challenger, Marciano took over the fight, constantly storming forward, even before his nose was badly injured. But due to his defensive savvy, as illustrated by this series of six sequential photos, Charles was able to nullify much of Marciano's onslaught—at least for a while.



Urged on by his manager to end the fight before the nose injury got any worse, Marciano knocked out Charles in the eighth round, retaining the heavyweight title for the fourth time. It was such a devastating defeat for Charles, it ended his chance of ever regaining the title.

refusing to get up when he could have done so. As he took the 10-count, Charles was arched over the ring floor, resting on his elbows and his knees. As referee Al Berl called off 10, ending the fight, Charles arose and went over to Marciano. He wrapped his arms around The Rock. No complaint then about a short count.

It was a fairly rough fight. Marciano thrice hit after the bell. Once Charles hit back. The champion also was cautioned once for a low punch, and in the seventh round the fans booed him for heeling.

However, one fact stands out—Charles never had a chance. He wasn't merely knocked out. He was knocked silly. He got to his feet after the kayo grinning. He could have been dreaming of a sweet and serene childhood.

If Charles gave the impression that he could have gone on, and didn't go on, it was a case of the spirit being willing, and the flesh being unequal to the task. He got a thrashing.

Charles never had been a big drawing card in New York. He never had been able to win Metropolitan fans over to the belief that he was an outstanding fighter. New York felt that, having failed with the greatest fight of his life, Charles could not hope to win in the second encounter.

Charles suffered from two major handicaps. The physical one came of his having given himself insufficient time to recover from the 45 minutes of battering he had taken in June. The mental one came of recollection of that battering, and appreciation of the hopelessness of his second task.

Charles was heavier for this fight than he had been for any other in his career. At the weighing in, he tipped the beam at 192, while the champion hit it at 187.

Having failed with speed and science, Charles figured that he would do better with more weight, and more pounds behind his punches. The first time he had planned to win on points. The second time he knew his only chance was to clip The Rock.

Because of an agreement with the Giants, who were playing a game with the Phillies that night, the fight got un-

der way at eleven o'clock. The opening bell sounded at 11:06, to be precise.

In the first round, Marciano was the inquisitive one. He wanted to see what Charles had learned in the June brawl. Charles hit him with a lead right to the jaw and a hard counter right to the same spot, and The Rock blinked. Charles maneuvered well in the clinches, looked strong, and the press row wrote him down for the first round

From then on, it was Marciano. Charles was knocked down for a two-count in the second round. In the eighth, he hit the deck for four before he suffered the quietus.

As the eighth got under way, Marciano landed a left hook that made the challenger's knees wobble. A right to the jaw, another hook, and a right put Charles on the skids. He looked like a corn stalk in a gale. He fell sideways, took no more than four, and got up, glassy-eyed, licked.

Marciano met Charles with another barrage. He had been told by Weill, "This must be it."

Lefts and rights, then the finishing hook, and Charles landed on all fours, at the end of the road.

There was no denying Marciano's superior strength and power, at times clumsy and awkward but always lethal, of the champion of the world.

The judges and the referee agreed that Charles had won the first round. The referee felt that the challenger had made an even showing in the fifth. But everything else was on the Rocky side of the ledger.

Once again had Marciano's famous Suzie Q, his powerful overhand right, in combination with that murderous left hook, turned in a most impressive, if not altogether classic, performance.

One thing is sure. Whereas Marciano ordinarily would have to fight soon in order not to get musclebound and loggy, he now is confronted with the necessity of taking a rest, and giving his nose job a lot of time to heal and set. After that, he doubtless will lose no sleep over the prospect of meeting Cockell or Valdes, or both. Neither of these men appears to be up to a fight with the champion.

As for Archie Moore, Weill is not interested. Nor does the IBC believe that a Marciano-Moore encounter would draw. Moore is nearing the end of his career. The match would be suspected of being merely a means for another retiring veteran's payday. ■

All better: There was concern that Marciano's nose injury would hamper him throughout the rest of his career. But Rocky defused that fear when he took time out from training for his upcoming bout with Cockell to show the press how well he'd healed.

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ROCKY REMEMBERED

September 21, 1955

Marciano, Victor In 1:19 Of The Ninth Round Over Archie Moore, Gains Recognition With All-Time Punchers

IT'S ROCK

By Nat Fleischer

Rocky Marciano, the 31-year-old undefeated world heavyweight champion, did it again.

The clouting fists of "The Brockton Blockbuster" enabled him to add to his knockout record, this time the victim being Archie Moore, seven years his senior and a veteran of close to 20 years of ring activity. Making his sixth title defense since winning it from Jersey Joe Walcott, Rocky ended the aspirations of the cocky light heavyweight king, who was making a bid for heavyweight honors. He halted Moore in 1:19 of round nine to make this his 49th-straight triumph and 43rd knockout. The kayo came after the challenger had been dropped four times and the champion once.

The master craftsman of the art of self-defense failed to accomplish what he so frequently preached during his many weeks of training—the end of Rocky's reign. The age handicap plus the powerful clouting powers of the defending champion were too great a handicap for the challenger to overcome. But he put up a sterling battle, fighting back, exchanging punches, and rocking his opponent on several occasions.

Marciano swings and misses with a mighty right uppercut in the early going of his fight with Moore. The light heavyweight champion had launched a lengthy publicity campaign to obtain a shot at the heavyweight title, and his efforts were largely responsible for attracting a gigantic crowd of more than 61,000 to Yankee Stadium for the much-anticipated showdown.

Moore almost sprang a tremendous upset when he floored Marciano with a right hand in the second round. But Moore made the mistake of going for the finish too soon, and The Rock blasted his way back, taking over the fight after the fifth round.

With 61,574 fans, who paid a gross of $948,117.95, watching the combat in the vast Yankee Stadium and millions more listening to the radio description in addition to the thousands who watched the fight on the screen in 133 theaters, in 92 cities, Marciano, as in almost every one of his previous contests, broke through the barrier after receiving plenty of punishment. However, once he gained the upper hand, he never relinquished it.

It was a splendid contest, true to the pre-battle predictions, a fight in which a far superior all-round performer, a challenger who had engaged in all parts of the world in 114 bouts in which he stopped 82 rivals and was halted only four times himself, learned that though the thousands of words he had used in his camp interviews in belittling the prowess of the champion aided considerably in making this the greatest payday Archie ever had in two decades of boxing, they didn't to any extent affect the fighting qualities of The Rock. If anything, it added to the determination of the defending champion to keep his record clean.

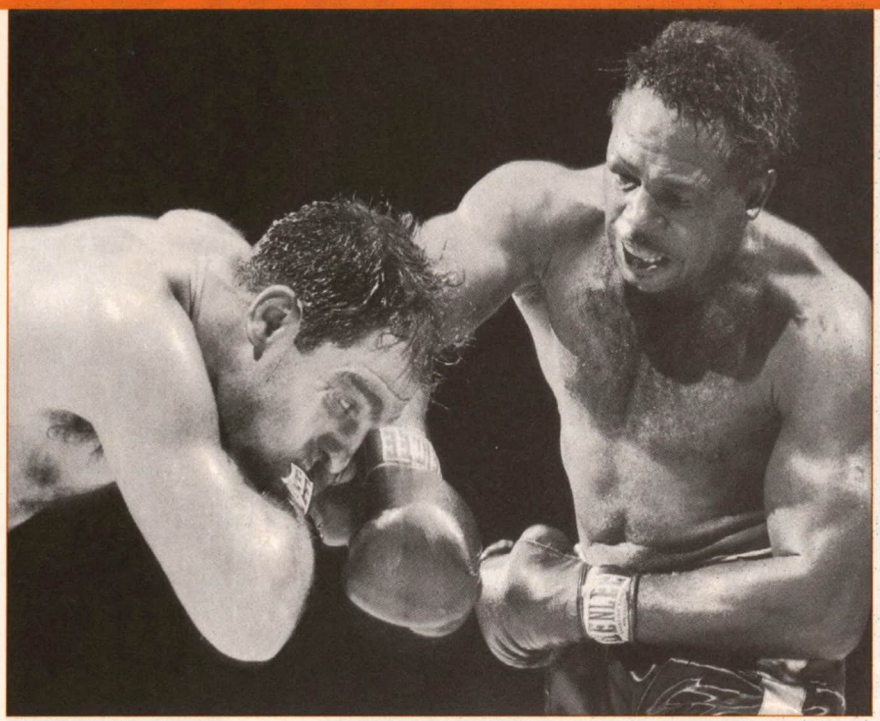
With the contest over, all eyes are now focused on the future. What's in store for both victor and vanquished since each is a crown-wearer and will be called upon to defend his laurels?

Though a six months period of grace is permitted under the rules before a champion must defend his laurels, the rule will have no bearing on Marciano's future. He has made known that there will be no winter fight for him.

His manager, Al Weill, expects that after a long rest The Rock will defend his crown again next June in New York, the city that enabled him to reap the richest harvest of the champ's career by turning out en masse to see him defend his crown, and in the interim he hopes to tour Italy on a good-will trip for the State Department.

Three heavyweights stand out as possible opponents for the June match—Bob Baker of Pittsburgh; Tommy Jackson, the Far Rockaway, New York, clown; and Nino Valdes of Cuba. Of the trio at this writing, Baker is the choice of Weill, as he was prior to the signing of Moore as Rocky's latest opponent.

Had it not been for public clamor, Baker would have been seen in the place of Moore at Yankee Stadium with probably a third of the gate in attendance, since he lacks color, has a weak chin, and has a brittle hand. Fortunate for Marciano and Jim Norris,



Moore, who came into the bout with 82 kayo wins, continued to connect with blows that would have felled many heavyweights, but Marciano, while rocked on numerous occasions, soaked up the punishment and kept advancing behind his crude but powerful blows.

the I.B.C. promoter, that Moore, not Baker, was the choice.

Archie sold himself to the public. It was he who made the fight the huge success it was financially. He kept up the public interest with his training camp chatters. Without belittling Marciano as an attraction, it must be frankly stated that without Moore, the last heavyweight title bout wouldn't have drawn half the amount it did with Baker, Jackson, or Valdes. Even Jim Norris and Weill admit that. Yet one of these three—if left to Weill, Baker will be the man—will be Rocky's next challenger.

Though Baker at this stage rates number one in world rankings, with Jackson next and Valdes third, the Cuban looms best as an attraction. Trained properly, he figures to give Rocky a better fight than either of the others. His appearance would lend international flavor to a battle in which the greatest pulverizing fighting machine would be pitted against ordinary talent such as the present trio of contenders make up.

His recent knockout of Don Cockell, who was forced to quit after three rounds, after the British heavyweight king had gone nine with Marciano, gives Valdes a big advantage over his rivals. The publicity angle must play a big part in the next heavyweight title bout, and Valdes' background overshadows that of Baker or Jackson, despite the fact that the Far Rockaway clown is a public favorite due to his ring antics.

But the fans will recall Nino's knockout of Jackson in two rounds and that won't help bring in the crowd for a fight between him and Rocky, despite Jackson's two victories over Ezzard Charles, whose days as a top fighter are close to an end.

From all angles, one must at this stage choose the Cuban as the best for the next shot, though much can happen between now to change the picture. As for Jim Norris, he says it is too early to think of Rocky's next opponent, but that he is figuring on an elimination, if such can be arranged, in which all three will participate.

So much for Marciano's future.

What of his victim? Moore still holds the world light heavyweight crown and declared that if he can get another shot at Marciano he'd like it, but if he can't, he's prepared to defend his title against the best challenger.

"Marciano knows where he can make some more big dough. He realizes, as I do, what fight will bring him another record crowd," said Moore. "I made one big mistake in following him after I had dropped him in the second round and had him groggy. I should have picked him off with straight punches, and I think I would have gotten him. Perhaps if I get another opportunity I'll fight him a little differently. I hope I can get that rematch, but if not, I still have others I can tackle."

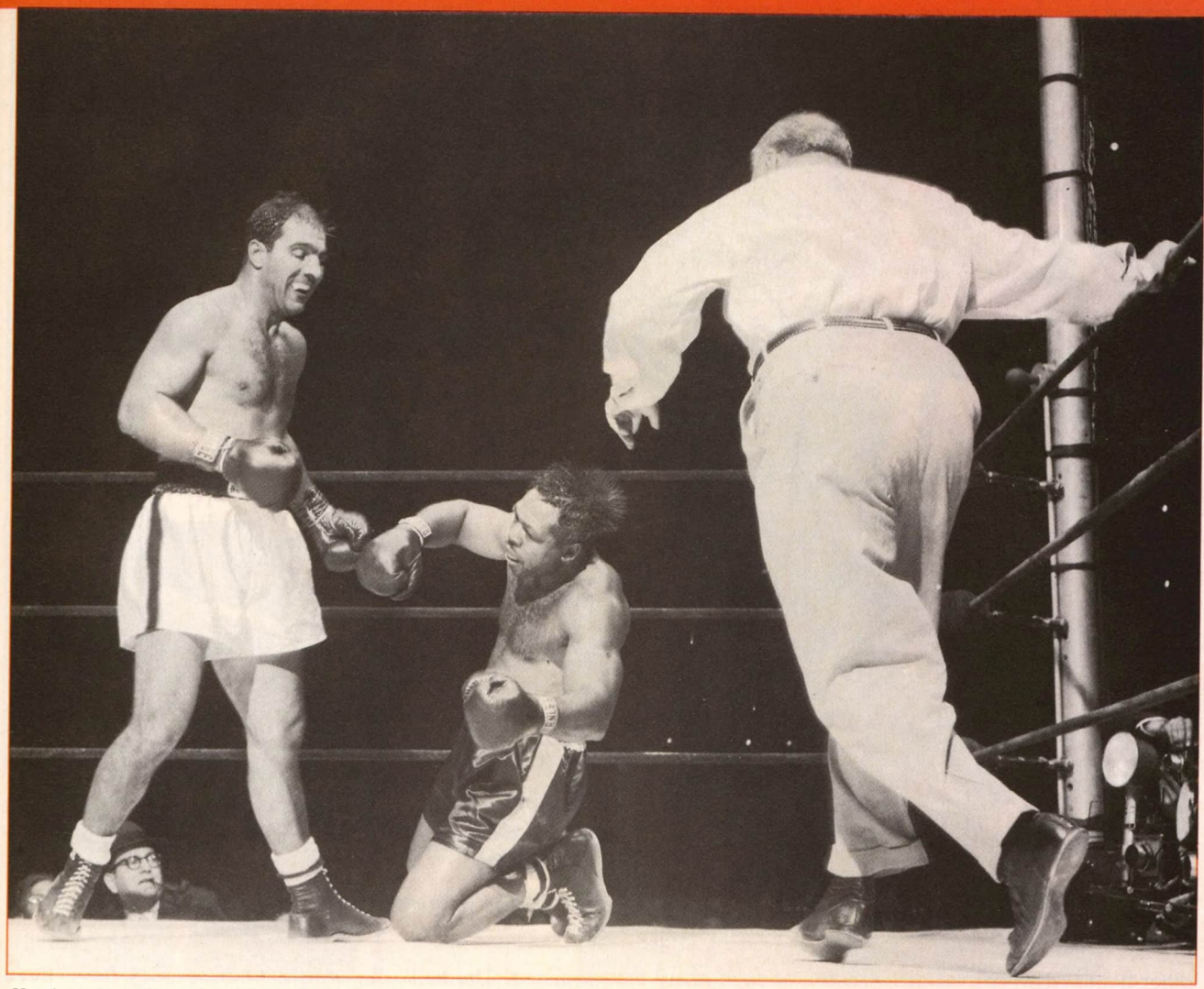
As for the thrilling battle that ended in Rocky's successful title defense, the champion will always remember that as his toughest and most thrilling. Few heavyweight frays have been marked by such dramatic fighting as this one in which The Brockton Blockbuster annexed his 43rd knockout and kept his slate clean.

Though all officials and every one of the several hundred scribes at the ringside had Rocky leading at the time of the finish, the scorecards didn't give a fair estimate of punishment meted out to the victor. Judge Harold Barnes, the best in New York, had Rocky ahead by a five to three count when the ninth started. The referee, Harry Kessler, scored five for Rocky, two for Moore, and one even, and Artie Aidala, the other judge, gave Moore only one round.

My tally was six to two. I gave Moore the second and fifth rounds.

But even in the rounds that Moore lost, he gave plenty and took plenty. There was no let up in his fighting. He stood his ground even when pressed against the ropes, which happened five times, and through the barrage tossed at him, he stopped more than half the punches with his arms or blocked them. But those that did come through struck with such effectiveness that they wore Moore down and paved the way for his ultimate downfall.

I doubt that any other of the present-day heavyweights would have lasted half the time Moore did facing such devastating blows. Had the champion landed 50 percent of the many punches he tossed at his challenger, Archie would never have survived the sixth round barrage in which he went down twice.



Marciano drops Moore for the second time in the sixth round. The fight might have ended then and there, but the round concluded soon after "Ancient Archie" went down and he was saved by the bell, which ultimately led to further abuse at the powerful hands of the marauding champion.

Many of Rocky's tosses went wild or were a little short of the mark. But his stamina, determination, and the tremendous power behind the punches that did connect were sufficient to enable him to come through with the victory that was so heavily predicted by the 4-1 ringside odds.

For a few moments in the second round, after Marciano had gained a clean margin advantage in the opening session, it seemed that the vast crowd would be treated to the biggest heavyweight championship upset since Jimmy Braddock dethroned Max Baer.

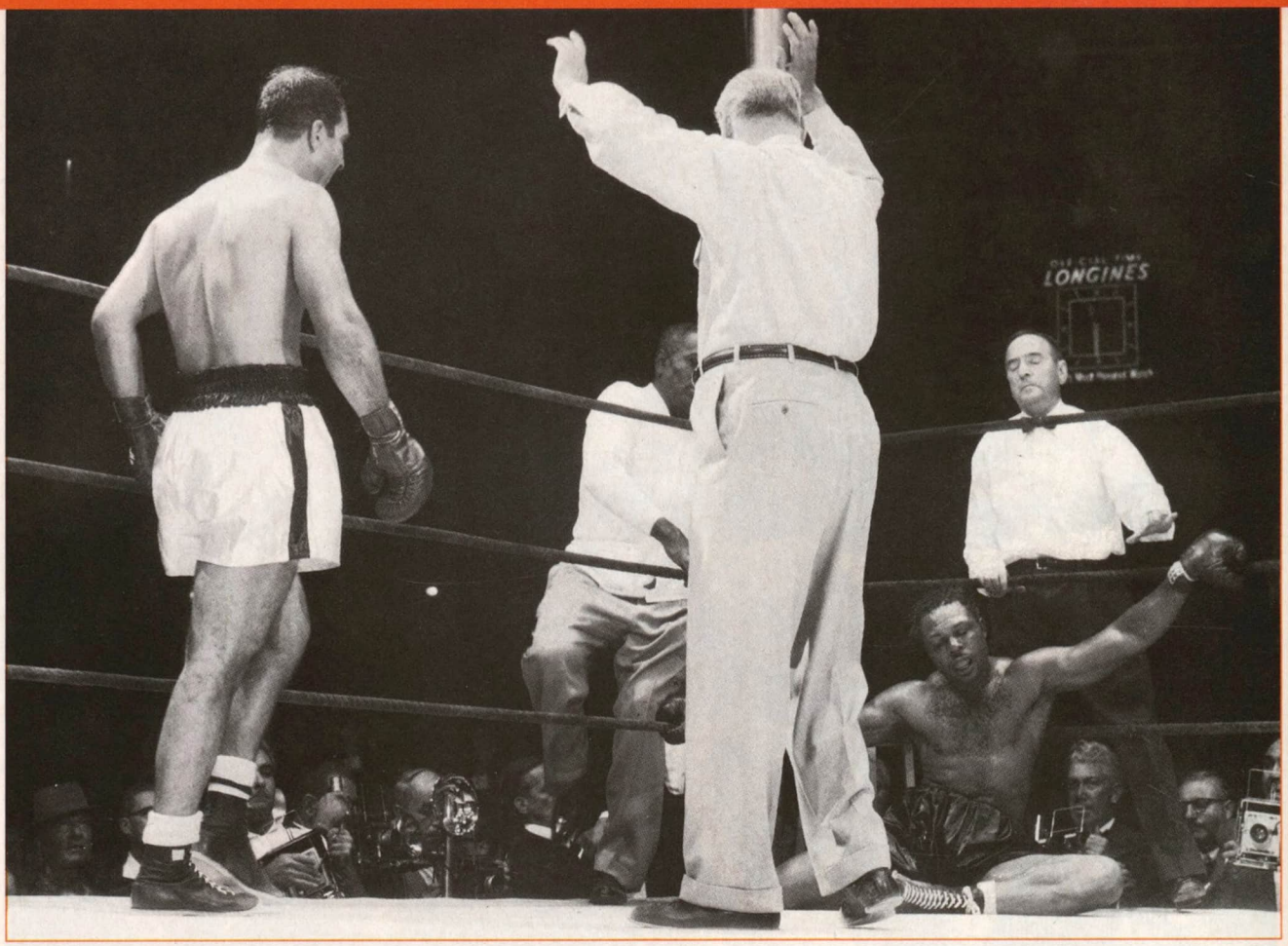
Fighting cleverly, Moore, stepping back as Rocky tried to nail him with a left hook, caught the champion with a short right to the jaw and dropped him amidst a howl from the thousands who packed the Stadium. Although The Rock got up at the count of two, he was dazed, and that's where Moore, with his knowledge of boxing gained through almost two decades against the world's best, made his mistake.

Instead of stepping out of range and depending on his long reach to take full advantage of the situation he had created, Moore went in for the kill. He went after Rocky and brought claret from the Rock's nose. But the champion, in close, was able to check the attack that might have proved fatal to him. Then, suddenly coming to life, he bounced a powerful right off Moore's chin and followed with an attack that ended only when the bell sounded.

As Marciano walked to his corner, he seemed a bit unsteady and blinked, but when the gong sounded for the third round, he was the old Rocky again, tossing blows from all angles, many missing, some landing, but ever on the go. From then on, Moore was subjected in every round to the withering fire of his adversary, who no matter how hard he was hit, fought as a challenger should— until his strength gave way, his arms grew weak, and the inevitable took place.

There's no fighter in the world today who could have given a better account of himself against such battering from a man of steel and iron as did Moore. He earned every penny he made.

It was a fierce, grueling fistic fray, a duel of leather such as was envisioned from the day the bout was arranged. Moore didn't let down his friends, his staunch supporters who fought his battle when he demanded recognition, nor did Marciano, who fought his usual crude but effective battering-ram fight. It was only the second time in Marciano's career that he was felled, the



Referee Harry Kessler signals the end of the fight as Moore is counted out at the 1:19 mark of the ninth round. Nobody knew it at the time, but it turned out to be Marciano's final fight. Moore, on the other hand, kept fighting until 1963.

other being when he was dropped in Philadelphia by Jersey Joe Walcott.

Marciano proved that he can take a punch, something many have doubted. Time and again the perfectly timed deliveries of Moore landed with effectiveness, several shook him up, yet the Brockton clouter came right back at his tormentor with a wild, furious attack of his own. He either cornered Moore in neutral territory or held him on one side of the ring against the ropes where he found the clever, experienced Moore blocking or taking the punches on his arms. Those terrific attacks made Moore's arms so heavy, he could hardly move them in the final round.

But it was not until the sixth round that Marciano took full charge. In that session he handed Moore a shellacking with rights to the jaw, twice putting the challenger on the canvas, once for four and again for an eight-count.

He gave Moore an unmerciful beating, pounding away with flaying fists, though many blows missed. The bell brought sweet music to Moore's ears.

As he staggered to his corner, Dr. Nardiello rushed into the ring, examined Moore, then advised referee Kessler on the challenger's condition, but permitted the bout to continue.

In the seventh round, Moore again hit the canvas, but the referee ruled this a slip, though Marciano had tapped Moore on the chin to put him off-balance. From then on, the champion continued his ruthless attack. It was evident to all that the bout would not go much longer, as Moore showed signs of distress combined with arm fatigue.

Marciano had Moore on the verge of a kayo in the eighth, when a looping right that landed somewhat as did the punches of Luis Firpo—a sort of chop—spilled Moore to the canvas in a squatting position. It didn't seem possible he could get up on time. He was still down when the bell came to his rescue at the count of six. Had it not, he would undoubtedly have been counted out.

Dr. Nardiello again raced into the ring for a quick examination of Moore and after advising Kessler, let Moore come out for a worse fate in the ninth—his last.

The end came as Marciano, bleeding from nose and a cut over the left eye sustained in the second round, rushed out for the kill.

Moore was weary, but refusing to yield. He stood his ground for a few seconds, and then was pounded into his own corner, where a hellish crossfire of lefts and rights that came so rapidly one couldn't keep up with the count, felled him again. Two pulverizing left hooks, one following quickly on the heels of the other, turned the trick.

Moore sank to the canvas. His legs were too heavy to enable him to move them. He sat with legs crossed, listening to the count of the referee through glazed eyes, his right half-closed and

Despite the amount of punishment both men took during their punchout, both seemed fine a few minutes after the fight was over. THE RING's Nat Fleischer called it a "splendid contest ... a fierce, grueling fistic fray, a duel of leather such as was envisioned from the day the bout was arranged."

claret coming from his nose. When the count reached eight, he made an attempt to rise, but sank back exhausted. He couldn't make it. The bombardment of The Brockton Blockbuster had taken its toll.

The fight was over. Moore was helped to his seat and he quickly recovered. He walked out to greet Rocky as the champ's hand was held up in victory, then to show he was not hurt badly, he shadow boxed a little in the ring, again walked over to Rocky and with arm about the champ's shoulders, posed for the movies and newspaper photographers.

This was a typical Marciano fight—a bout in which he displayed as much crudeness as in each of his previous engagements, but did land more punches than heretofore and with greater effectiveness.

As in the fight with Walcott in Philadelphia, he bled from his nose, was down once, was jarred many times, missed swinging blows, was cut up in several places, and took plenty of punishment.

But he retained his throne, still undefeated since he started his professional career—a clouter extraordinary who takes his place in ring history with the great hitters of all-time— James J. Jeffries, Bob Fitzsimmons, Jack Dempsey, and Joe Louis. He came through triumphantly on his punching power and stamina despite his crudeness.

At 188 pounds he seemed to be fit as a fiddle, a weight that suited him. His opponent scaled a quarter of a pound less, and the weight made him somewhat sluggish. He would have had more speed with a few pounds less.

The fight took its place with championship postponements in three of which Marciano figured. The Walcott-Marciano and Charles-Marciano fights each were postponed twice, and now the Moore fight, which, due to the possibility of Hurricane Ione striking New York, was delayed a day.

The affair continued the jinx that hangs over the head of all light heavyweight champions who have attempted to wrest the crown from the heavyweight kings. No one thus far has succeeded to turn the trick.

Two all-time greats among the heavyweights, Jack Johnson and Jack Dempsey, lost their titles in their sixth title defense, but Marciano overcame that hurdle by successfully coming through against Moore. ■

ROCKY REMEMBERED

April 27, 1956

Husband, Father Marciano No Longer Looks Like Fighter

ROCKY MARCIANO
PRIVATE CITIZEN

Manager Weill (left) and promoter Jim Norris look on as their number-one meal ticket officially hangs up his gloves on April 27, 1956. Marciano swore that he would never make a comeback, and unlike so many other fighters, he kept his word.

Marciano shakes hands with a young admirer during a parade for the retired heavyweight champion in his hometown of Brockton, Massachusetts. "I didn't realize when I made the decision how many people would be happy for me in my retirement," said Marciano.

By Al Buck

Rocky Marciano says he never will fight again. Looking at him you have no doubt he means it. The retired undefeated heavyweight champion is fat, must weigh at least 225 pounds, and no longer has the appearance of an athlete. In fact, a year after his retirement the always well-conditioned Marciano is not an athlete.

Rocky is the undefeated heavyweight champion, and the object of attention wherever he goes. We saw him in New York during the World Series. In Toots Shor's, autograph-seekers crowded around him. Friends and folks he didn't know stopped to say "Hi, Rock."

Two young girls came up and said: "Do you remember us, Rocky?" When Marciano hesitated, they added: "We're from Hartford."

"Oh, yes," said Rocky. "I appeared at a benefit there."

"For the policeman who got shot," said one of the girls.

"I remember," Rocky said.

"I told you he'd remember us," one girl said to the other.

Marciano still is living the life of a champion outside the ring. Only there is no training and no fighting. The Series had just shifted to Yankee Stadium for the third game when Rocky arrived.

"I've just come from the Coast," he said. "I was out there for *The Red Skelton Show*. TV and personal appearances keep me busy, and I'm making money."

MADE TOP SPOTS IN HECTIC OLD NEW YORK

During the Series, Marciano was like any out-of-town fan in New York for the weekend. He was seen at the Copacabana, laughing at Joe E. Lewis' jokes, and dining late at the Harwyn Club. These are spots to which any young man might go to have fun. They are not places where a fighter would train, unless he was a Harry Greb or a Maxie Rosenbloom. Rocky's presence only emphasized his sincere belief he is through with the ring, forever. His career ended, the retired champion insists, when he knocked out Archie Moore.

What of another career, one outside of the ropes? He is retired from boxing, but he is only 33, an age when many

Marciano plays with his three-year-old daughter, Mary Anne. After years of being away from home to train and fight, the retired champion said he wanted to spend every possible minute with his family.

men just are getting established in business.

"I expect to make a sound business connection shortly," Marciano said. "I have several prospects."

He declined to say just what those prospects are, since he hasn't made up his mind which one to take. In the meantime he is still cashing in on his fame as a champion.

"I got a good price for my life story. Did you like it?" Rocky said. "It is all true. I told what I had heard about Jersey Joe Walcott having a foreign substance rubbed on his gloves in our first fight. I know something got in my eyes.

"And about my back. It always troubled me."

Marciano's autobiography, printed as a six-part serial in a weekly, has had repercussions. Al Weill, the champ's manager, is bitter over the treatment he received, and some of Weill's more articulate friends refer to the fighter as "an ingrate." The impression created by Rocky's ghosts is that while Marciano and Weill were associates, they never were friends.

Each did his job, and did well. Weill, doubling as the International Boxing Club matchmaker in the beginning, gave Rocky a careful build-up, while Marciano did his part by winning. As long as Marciano was active, Weill was the absolute boss.

It is probable that the first major decision Marciano ever made on his own was the all-important one to retire.

Charley Goldman, Marciano's trainer and teacher, and the man most responsible for his success in the ring, denies he was in the dark concerning the slipped disc in Rocky's back. Rocky's version is it was a well-kept secret, known only to Allie Columbo, his boyhood friend and assistant trainer.

"As far back as 1949 I took Rocky to Dr. Robert Sachs for treatment," Goldman told me one night at the St. Nicholas Arena in New York. "If you noticed, I never had him push and shove about the ring with sparring partners while he was training. I knew I had to be careful because of the trouble Rocky was having with his back."

Marciano's business opportunities are reported to include a promotional job with Sunnyhurst Dairy, located at Stoneham, Massachusetts. The dairy is owned by Ernie Clevio, long a close friend. The Independent Nail and Packing Company, located in Brockton, may have an opening for him in public relations. A similar spot may be found for him at the Holland Furnace Company, in Holland, Michigan, where he trained for the second Walcott fight.

So far the only job Rocky has had has been that of press agent for a dog track at Revere, Massachusetts. His duties for the most part have consisted of presenting a trophy to the owner of a winning dog.

Marciano's investments bring him

Marciano remained a much sought-after celebrity after retiring from the ring. He is pictured here on the set of the movie **A Face In The Crowd**, *along with co-stars Andy Griffith and Patricia Neal. The movie's director, Elia Kazan, was a friend of Rocky's.*

in between $10,000 and $15,000 a year. He owns his own home, valued at $40,000, in Brockton, and he is still in demand on TV and personal appearances. After his stint with Skelton on the Coast, he did a bit on *The Walter Winchell Show* in New York. From such activities he should pick up about $35,000 in his first year of retirement.

In Weill's place, to all outward appearances, is Jack Worst, a diamond merchant from Dayton, Ohio. Wherever you see Rocky, Jack is always at his elbow ready to pick up the check.

Marciano continues to enjoy popularity. Last summer, a Toronto newspaper paid him a fat fee to report the Moore-James J. Parker fight, billed throughout Canada as for the "world heavyweight championship." Marciano showed up at the ringside in a white dinner jacket.

He was just another reporter until the fight was over. On leaving the Maple Leaf Stadium, he suddenly became a celebrity again. He was mobbed by well-wishers seeking autographs, his clothes were messed.

"It was worse than the night I knocked out Moore in Yankee Stadium," Marciano said. He was forgetting that in the Stadium he had the protection of New York policemen, assigned to guard a champion who was performing at his trade. In Toronto, no one expected the fans to swarm over him, as they did, and no arrangements were made to give him police protection.

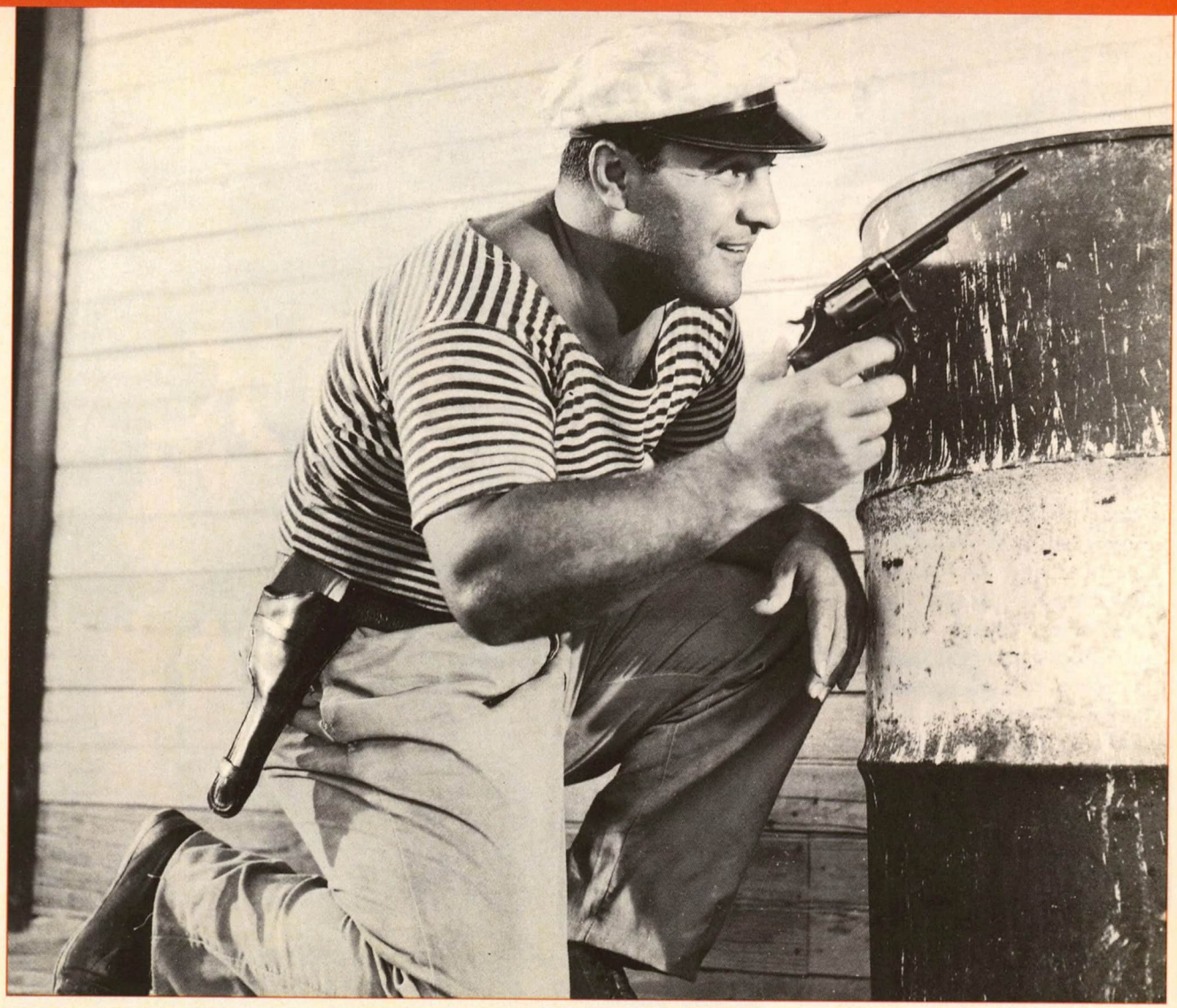
The same thing almost happened, although in a minor way, when Marciano took a seat in the working press section at the Carmen Basilio-Johnny Saxton world welterweight title fight at Syracuse. There was a rush of autograph-seekers.

HOW LONG WILL THIS CROWD ADULATION CONTINUE?

How long will it last? As Jimmy Walker once observed: "The cheers of yesterday have faint echoes." Of course, Rocky's position is unique. He retired undefeated. The record is 49 for 49, and unless he changes his mind about fighting again, nothing can alter it.

In Washington, D.C., recently Marciano repeated his vow never to fight again. He was being honored by the Lido Civic Club, an organization of businessmen of Italian descent, as the "Man Of The Year."

Marciano also received the "star of solidarity" from the Italian ambassador. This was the first time the honor had been conferred on anyone outside the Italian government. It was also a prelude to a proposed tour of Italy by the retired heavyweight champion. Rocky and his wife, Barbara, made a



Marciano even tried a bit of acting himself, appearing in one TV show as a gun-toting villain. Marciano invested his ring earnings well, and together with the money he earned from various public relations jobs, continued to make a good living.

similar State Department-sponsored tour of South America shortly before he announced his retirement.

Barbara was one of the reasons the Rock retired. Another was his daughter, Mary Anne. When he was champion, Rocky was either training or fighting. Now he is enjoying his home, and family life. He gets around the country enough to keep him interested and before the public, but there are long periods when he is in Brockton. He plays with his daughter, cuts up touches with old friends, and eats when and what he wants.

Marciano was always a big eater, but training as he did, he burned up the excess food. Today it is settling in fat on his stocky frame, and if he were to change his mind about coming back, it would be a difficult task. It would take six months, at least, to get him into condition before he could think about sharpening his punches.

It would be a strenuous undertaking, but one others have tried for various reasons. James J. Jeffries, first heavyweight champion to retire, was talked into coming back six years later to fight Jack Johnson and "redeem the prestige of the white race." The result was inevitable. No such situation confronts Marciano in the more tolerant world of today.

Joe Louis retired too, only to return to fight Ezzard Charles. Again the result was inevitable. Louis needed money to pay his debts, including income taxes. Marciano appears to be in good condition financially.

Gene Tunney was the exception. When he retired undefeated, it was for good. Marciano can profit from Tunney's example.

Still, the cynics say Rocky will fight again, once his contract with Weill expires in July. He is sure to get a six-figure offer to fight the new champ, and it will be hard to resist. He is only 33. Bob Fitzsimmons was 35 and Walcott 37 when they won the title.

Marciano is going to feel the pressure, but in resisting it he will have the support of his wife, his mother, and his father. They are all happy The Rock is retired. They want him to stay that way.

Rocky Marciano— retired fighter, citizen, father, husband—is having a fine time and there is no wolf at the door. ■

Plane Crash Takes The Life Of Only Undefeated Heavyweight Champ

ROCKY MARCIANO 1923-1969

By Ted Carroll

Rocky Marciano is gone, long before his allotted time. But the lesson of his life will linger on as long as men have goals and the ambition to reach them. No man ever made better use of what he had to offer than "The Brockton Blockbuster."

Marciano's assets when he decided to become a professional fighter, consisted of a powerful body, a heavy punch, and determination. These advantages were solid, but his liabilities were equally formidable. His beginning age of 25 was rather late for a boxer. He possessed little or no natural boxing aptitude. He was lumbering, awkward, ungainly in movement, and was short for a heavyweight in both height and reach.

With fanatical dedication and iron will, Rocky turned these drawbacks into assets. He made himself even shorter in the ring by crouching, thereby becoming a more difficult target. He neutralized his short reach by continually pressing forward. Realizing that classic boxing was beyond his limits, he turned his awkwardness into a puzzling forearm-barricaded defense which opponents found hard to penetrate. Through long hours of practice he developed a left hook that supplemented his looping right. He saddled himself with a monastic life of intense conditioning throughout his boxing career, swapping youthful pleasures and wifely companionship for a Spartan existence. This sacrifice gave him unbelievable endurance and stamina.

Marciano drained the last bit of mileage out of what he had to start with, turning his minuses into plusses. Time after time in his fighting days, his style and dedication turned impending defeat into victory. Against Jersey Joe Walcott in the match in which he became champion, half-blinded and blinking from a medication that had dripped into his eyes, Rocky persisted doggedly until the condition cleared itself up. Against Louis, he was unable to avoid Joe's poleaxing left jab. Marciano later admitted, "I couldn't avoid it. I just had to take it, my face was sore for a week after the fight." But he persevered until he finally caught up with the fading "Brown Bomber." Few fighters have suffered damage as serious as the deep nose wound Marciano received in his second fight with Ezzard Charles, but he came on to win.

All of us, whatever our life's objectives, would do well to ponder the Marciano predilection for turning liabilities into assets, and getting the last ounce of effectiveness out of whatever natural gifts—no matter how slight—fortune has granted us. As the career of Rocky Marciano—the only undefeated heavyweight champion of the world—proved miracles can arise out of sacrifice, dedication, determination, and courage no matter what the obstacles. However corny this may sound, it remains one of life's realities and will be so until the end of time.

In the series on "The Black Man And Boxing," currently appearing in this magazine, the communion between fighters of varying ethnic backgrounds and their deep and sincere friendships has been stressed. This was never more evident than in the recent passing of Marciano when former opponents Louis, Archie Moore, Charles, and Walcott took the lead in expressing grief and praise for the departed champion. Moore's comment was typical. "Rocky Marciano was the kind of man you were proud to call a friend," said the grieving Moore. Louis attended the funeral services in Brockton, Massachusetts, and Fort Lauderdale, Florida, where Cassius Clay and Jimmy Ellis were among the mourners. ■

Marciano died on August 31, 1969, when the private plane in which he was a passenger crashed into a field near Newton, Iowa, killing the three people on board.

ROCKY REMEMBERED

"He Just Came Forward And Never Stopped Throwing Punches"

Exclusive Interviews With Marciano Opponents

TED LOWRY & KEENE SIMMONS

Rocky Marciano has been dead more than 36 years, and most of his opponents have also passed from this world. But four of "The Brockton Blockbuster's" former foes—Harry Haft, Roland LaStarza, Keene Simmons, Ted Lowery—are still alive, and THE RING *contributor Robert Mladinich spoke with two of them for this special edition. He asked both of these remarkable men similar questions, giving readers a unique insight into what it was like to face the legendary champ in the ring.*

PHOTO BY TEDDY BLACKBURN

Former Marciano rivals Simmons and Lowry ham it up at Lowry's 80th birthday in October 1999. Together, they logged almost 28 rounds of pro action with "The Brockton Blockbuster" and are still around to tell the tale.

"TIGER" TED LOWRY

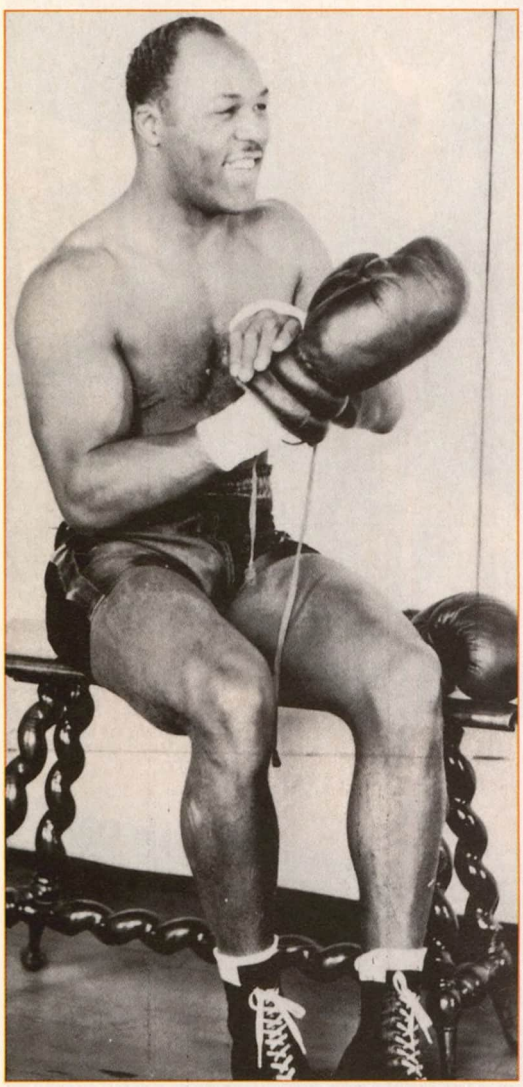
Ted Lowry, who hailed from Portland, Maine, but fought out of New Bedford, Massachusetts, twice fought Marciano and both times lost 10-round unanimous decisions. In their first encounter, however, at the Rhode Island Auditorium in Providence, in October 1949, the *Providence Journal* had Lowry ahead six rounds to four. Lowry concedes that he deserved to lose their second fight, which took place at the same venue in November 1950.

Campaigning from 1939-'55, Lowry, who was a decorated World War II veteran, amassed a 64-65-9 (41) record against some of the best fighters of the day. He barnstormed the country fighting such championship-caliber fighters and top contenders as Archie Moore, Joey Maxim, "Tiger" Jack Fox, Harry "Kid" Matthews, Jimmy Bivins, and Roland LaStarza.

Marciano, as well as LaStarza, have both lamented that it was nearly impossible to hit Lowry with a solid punch. His tremendous defense obviously paid off. Now 85 years old, his mind is razor sharp and his body is incredibly fit. He still works full-time as a concrete contractor and part-time as a school bus monitor. He lives in Norwalk, Connecticut, with his wife of 40 years, Alice.

THE RING: By fighting such a popular champion, do you feel as if you are part of boxing history yourself?

Lowry: Definitely, because people are always telling me that I'm part of history. When I fought Rocky, I had no idea I'd be getting all these accolades so many years later. I never thought he would become as big as he did, because I assumed they were giving him set-ups.



This is how Lowry looked in his prime as a top-of-the-line journeyman. Many observers, including the* Providence Journal, *thought that "Tiger Ted" should have been given the nod in his first fight with Marciano.

THE RING: What do you remember most about your fights with him?

Lowry: As soon as he hit me, I realized how much power he had. It was raw, natural power. Rocky was not smart in the ring. He was a wild swinger, but he was so strong. I kept hitting him with an uppercut that knocked a lot of people out, but he just kept coming back. He was always in great condition.

THE RING: Do you consider Marciano an all-time great?

Lowry: The greatest fighter I ever saw was Joe Louis, and I can't fathom Rocky beating him if they had fought in Joe's prime. I don't think that Rocky would have beaten Archie Moore or Ezzard Charles if he had fought them earlier in their careers. I'm not trying to talk bad about Rocky, but he was managed very well.

THE RING: What are your most vivid memories of Marciano the fighter?

Lowry: He was not a boxer; he was a fighter. There is a very big difference between the two. A boxer moves around, can roll with punches and not get hit solidly. They can play mind games with you because you can't contemplate what's going to happen. With Rocky there were no surprises. He just came forward and never stopped throwing punches.

THE RING: Is there anyone you can compare him to today?

Lowry: You can't compare Rocky to anyone, from the past or the present. He was unique. Some people say he was like a young Mike Tyson, but that's not fair to him. Once Tyson stopped intimidating people, he couldn't get out of the way of a jab. Rocky had a better defense than he gets credit for. It was based on his offense. He was so well-conditioned and never got tired.

THE RING: Who would have won between Marciano and a prime Tyson?

Lowry: I'd have to say Rocky because of his conditioning. He wouldn't have been intimidated by Tyson like so many other opponents were. Nobody could intimidate him. Some of today's taller fighters, like Lennox Lewis, would have given Rocky trouble because of their height and reach.

THE RING: Do you consider Marciano your toughest opponent?

Lowry: No, Archie Moore was a lot better all-around fighter who could really hurt you too. And he was very smart in the ring. Having ring smarts and power, that made him more dangerous than Rocky.

THE RING: What sticks with you most about your two encounters with him?

Lowry: I still think I won the first fight, and so do a lot of other people. But boxing being boxing, you get used to taking the good with the bad. I just wish I could see a film of that fight. I understand there are people that have one, but are unwilling to let the public see it. I would love to get a copy.

THE RING: Is there any personal anecdote or memory, good or bad, we might not know about that you'd like to share?

Lowry: After our first fight, we both ended up in the Celebrity Club in Providence. We were introduced to Ella Fitzgerald, who was performing there. Inside the ring, I think Rocky was disappointed that he could never put me away, but outside the ring we got along swell.

KEENE SIMMONS

Marciano squared off against Simmons, who hailed from Bayonne, New Jersey, at the Rhode Island Auditorium, in Providence, in January 1951. The Rock was 31-0 (27) and Simmons was 8-8-1 (3). Even so, Simmons' nominal record belied his talent, and he came awfully close to upsetting Marciano in the fifth round of a furiously bloody battle. Marciano hung on and stopped Simmons with only six seconds remaining in the eighth round.

Afterward, Simmons regularly went to camp with Marciano and was one of his chief sparring partners for his biggest fights. Two years after fighting Marciano, Simmons went the distance with Cleveland Williams, another pulverizing puncher. Other notables he tangled with include Roland LaStarza, Nino Valdes, and Tommy "Hurricane" Jackson. Simmons retired from the ring in 1955 with a record of 8-23-1 (3) and was employed as a New York City bus driver for 20 years. Now 85 years old and in relatively good health, he resides in Queens, New York, with his wife of 48 years, Thelma.

THE RING: By fighting such a popular champion, do you feel as if you are part of boxing history yourself?

Simmons: Absolutely! I fought him and I sparred with him for many years. Rocky was a good fighter and a good man. I had great respect for him, as both a fighter and a person.

THE RING: What do you remember most about your fight with him?

Simmons: He had so much heart and would never give up. There was nothing you could do to discourage him, in the ring and in camp.

THE RING: Is there any fighter today that he can be compared to?

Simmons, pictured on the receiving end of a long right hand from Tommy "Hurricane" Jackson, came close to stopping Marciano in their bloody 1951 battle, but The Rock survived a rugged fifth round to stop Simmons in the eighth. After that, Simmons became one of Rocky's regular sparring partners.

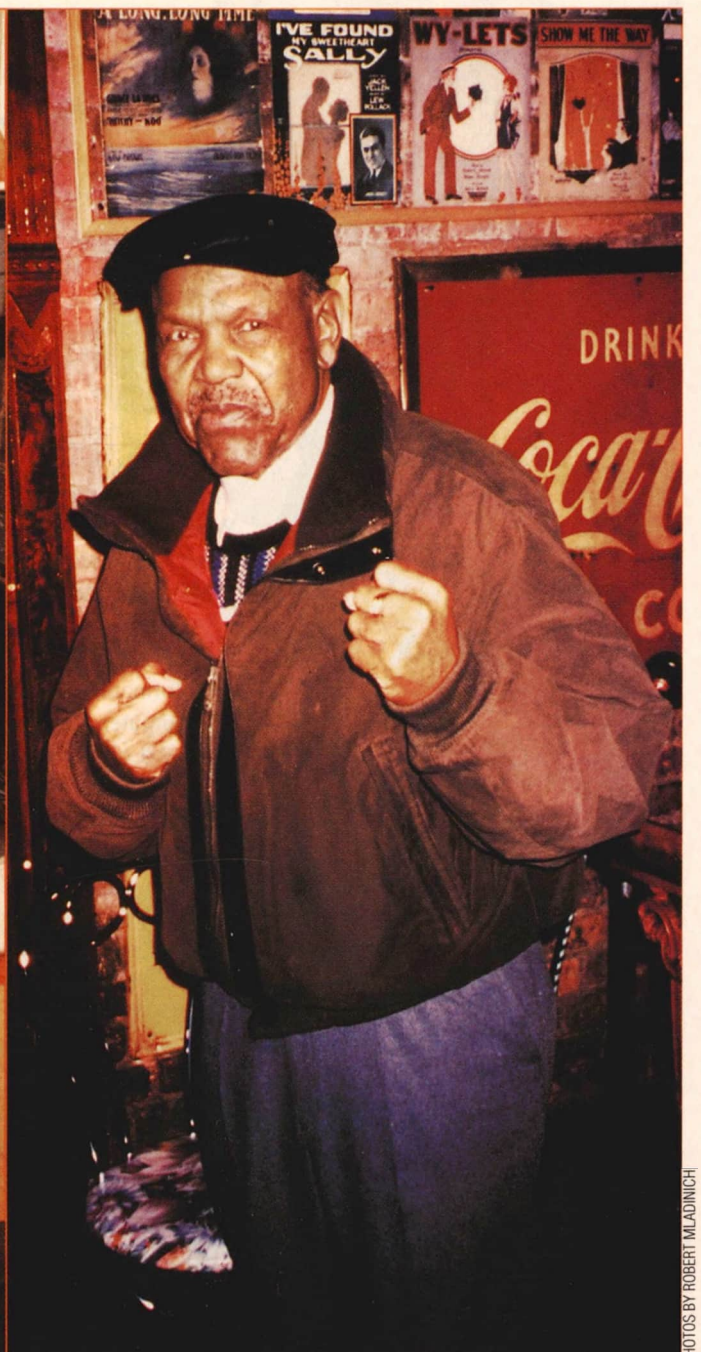
Simmons: Not really. Rocky was a unique and great fighter. He was sort of like Mike Tyson, with the power and aggressiveness, but Rocky was much better. He would have beaten Mike. He was just so tough. He could take it and he could give it. And he never would think of quitting.

THE RING: Do you consider Marciano an all-time great?

Simmons: Yes, but when I fought him we were on the same level. Later, he became a real good article.

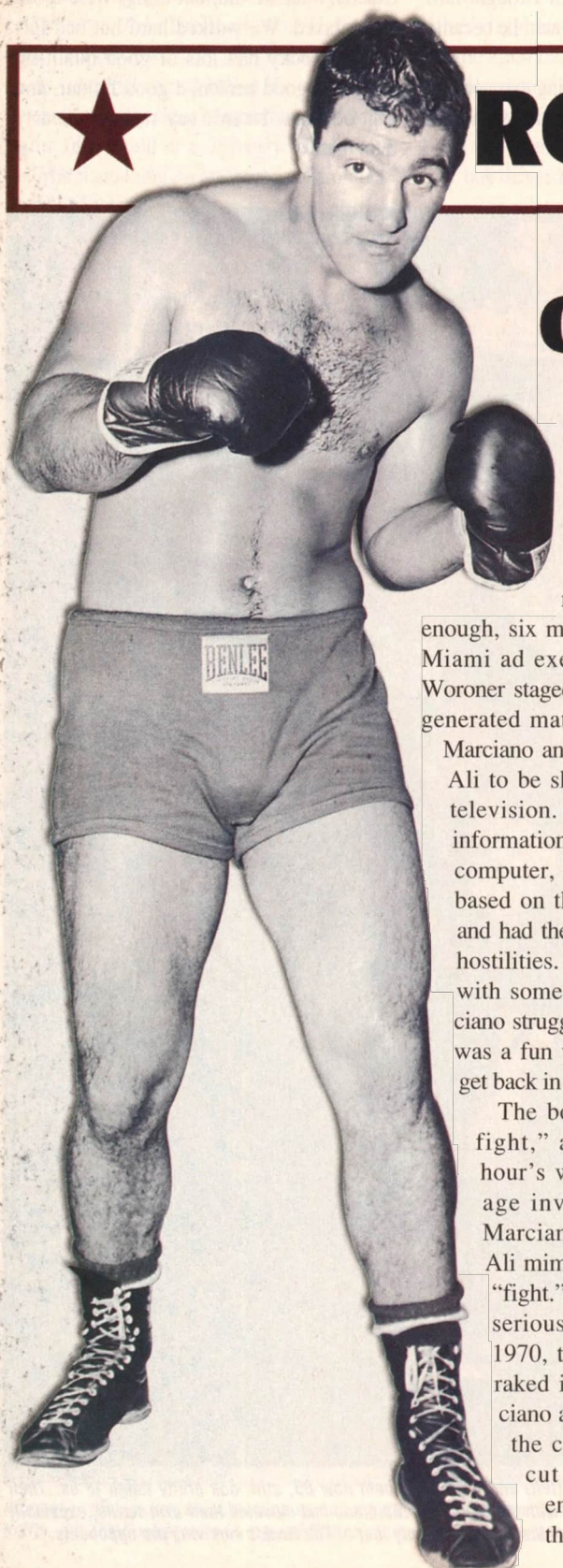
THE RING: Is there anything that you can share with us about Marciano that we might not know?

Simmons: Outside the ring, in camp, I remember having fun. I can't tell you exactly what we did, but things were loose and relaxed. We worked hard but had lots of fun. Rocky had lots of good qualities. He was a good person, a good fighter, and a good man. I can't say it more clearly than that. ■



PHOTOS BY ROBERT MLADINICH

Lowry (left) and Simmons, both now 85, still look pretty tough to us. Their history with the legendary Marciano has elevated their own status, especially now that they are two of only four of The Rock's surviving pro opponents.



ROCKY REDUX

A New Look At An Old Champion

By Don Stradley

The most watched fight of Rocky Marciano's career took place, strangely enough, six months after his death. A Miami ad executive named Murray Woroner staged a simulated, computer-generated match between the retired Marciano and the exiled Muhammad Ali to be shown via closed-circuit television. Woroner allegedly fed information on both fighters into a computer, sketched out a scenario based on the computer's findings, and had the two fighters act out the hostilities. Although Ali ended up with some bruised ribs, and Marciano struggled with his hairpiece, it was a fun way for both fighters to get back in the spotlight.

The bout was called "Superfight," and the result was an hour's worth of dreamlike footage involving a 45-year-old Marciano and an out-of-shape Ali miming their way through a "fight." No one took the event seriously, but on January 20, 1970, theaters across America raked in $2.5-million as Marciano and Ali took boxing into the computer age. Woroner cut the film to have two endings—in cities where the population was largely black, Ali won. In areas that were predominately white, Marciano won.

When Superfight later aired on *ABC's Wide World Of Sports*, America saw the version with Marciano victorious. ABC may have chosen the Marciano version out of respect to the dead fighter, but more than likely, the choice had to do with the controversies surrounding Ali's draft dodging. The polite, unassuming Marciano was suddenly looked upon with rosy nostalgia.

It was about time Marciano received some kudos. Although generally well-regarded, his place in boxing history had never been clear-cut. When Marciano retired in 1956, there was a sense that he'd gone unappreciated during his reign, and there followed, for a short time, some belated respect for him. But retirement didn't serve Marciano well. His personal life turned shabby, and the boxing world relegated him to a spot just south of the all-time greats. His untimely death elevated his profile briefly, but gradually he went the way of hula-hoops, pink Cadillacs, and other relics of Eisenhower's America.

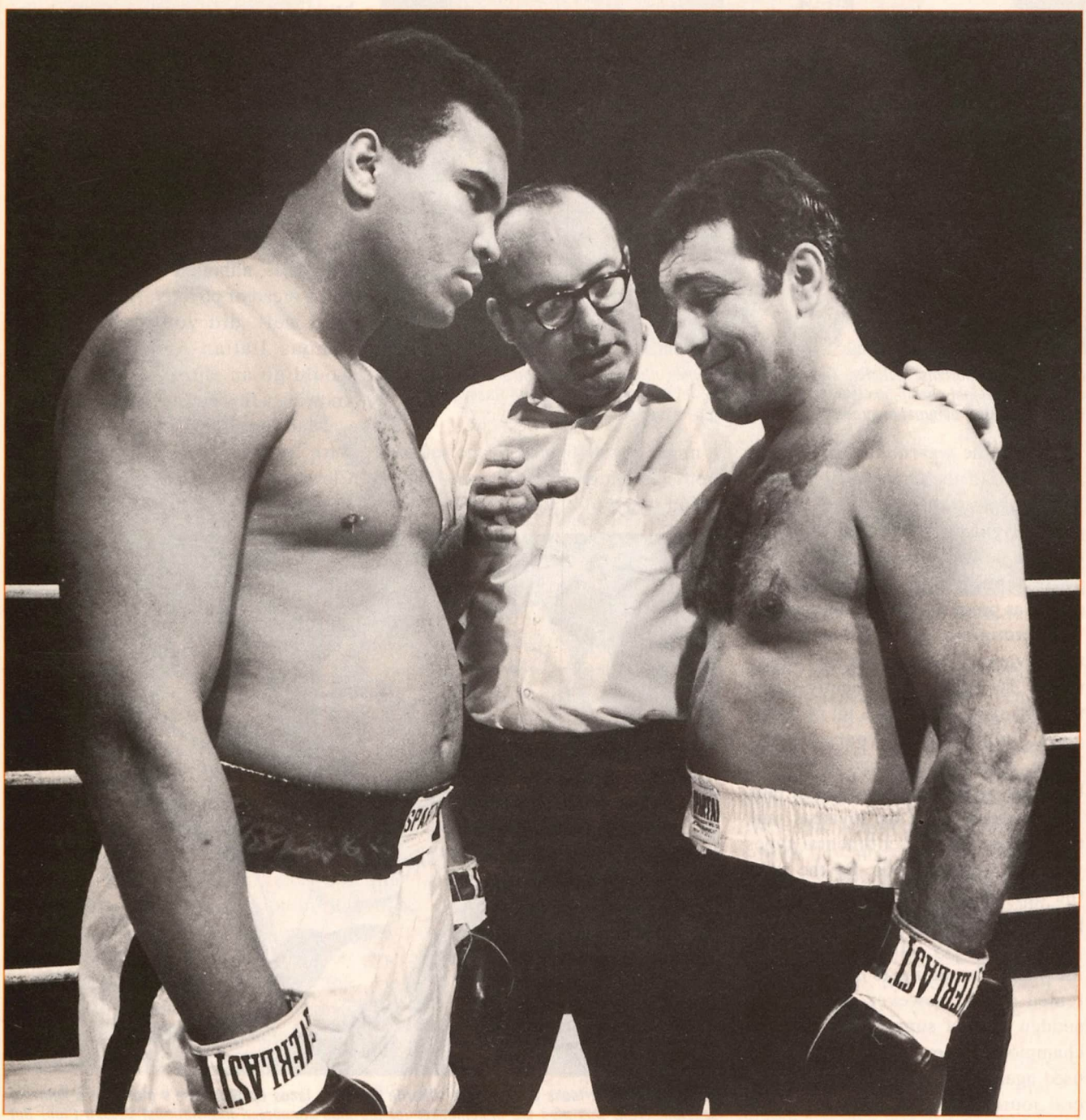
Of course, when boxing writers made lists of great fights, Marciano's bout with Jersey Joe Walcott would always be mentioned. When great punchers were recalled, Marciano's name was always near the top of the list. But when experts talked about great fighters, suddenly there was hesitation.

They argued that Marciano, unlike the truly great ones, hadn't really transcended the sport. His raw style and short title reign were held against him. If not for retiring undefeated, the feeling went, Marciano would never be mentioned along with the sport's legendary figures. Even Jack Dempsey acted as if Marciano wasn't worthy of a seat at some hypothetical banquet for heavyweight idols.

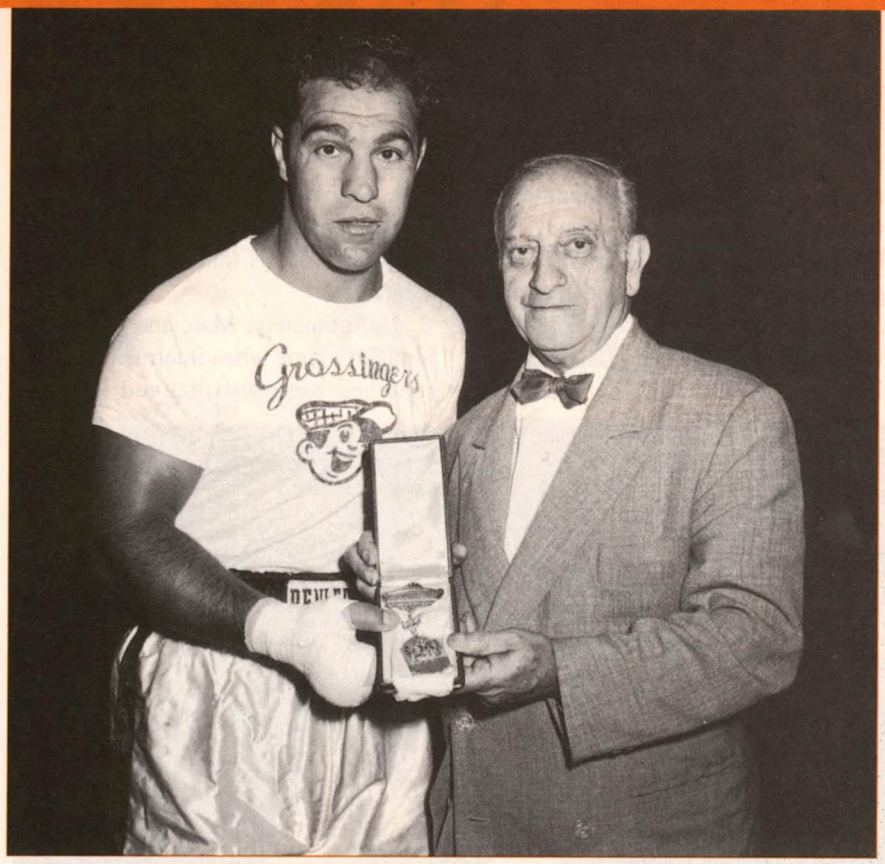
"He's just average," Dempsey told *The San Francisco Examiner* in 1955. "He has too many flaws to be a great fighter."

Marciano was an easy target for purists. At the time of his reign, the pundits were still worshipping the likes of Jim Jeffries and Gene Tunney. They didn't want the party crashed by a clumsy ex-GI who turned pro at 25 after failing at baseball. Even THE RING's founder, Nat Fleischer, rated Marciano well below the champions who'd come before him. Maybe they begrudged Marciano because he did everything ass-backward and still came out on top. Or maybe it was because he'd destroyed Joe Louis, the national icon. Regardless of his success, purists considered Marciano a mug. "He's an ignoramus of his trade," wrote Jimmy Cannon.

Unfortunately, Marciano also came along at a time when interracial boxing matches were still banned in some



Murray Woroner, the man behind the Marciano-Ali computer fight, has a few pointers for the out-of-shape Ali and the toupee-topped Marciano. Ironically, more people saw this choreographed fantasy match than any of The Rock's 49 professional fights.



Many boxing historians, including THE RING's Nat Fleischer, didn't rate Marciano as highly as many of the heavyweight champions who came before him. In 1958, Fleischer ranked Rocky number 10 in his list of all-time great heavyweights. Jack Johnson headed the list.

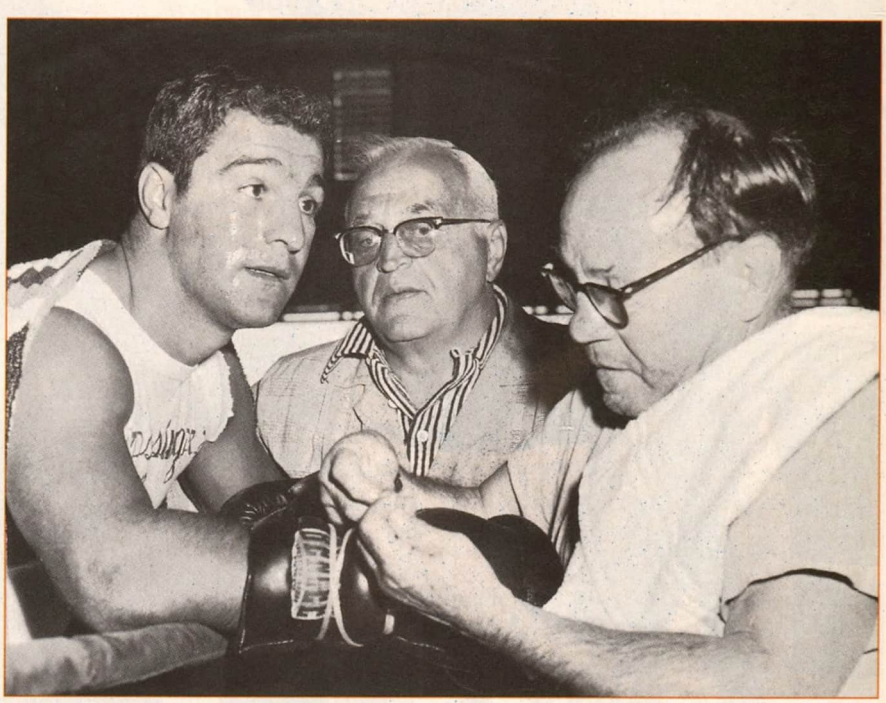
states, and he was snidely referred to as the last of the Great White Hopes. Some suggested he was merely a competent fighter who became popular because he was white. Since his supporters pointed to his undefeated record as proof of his greatness, it, too, was scrutinized, as critics harped on the advanced ages of his key opponents. The critics conveniently forgot that Marciano also beat a lot of young guys, including 23-year-old Rex Layne, who was perceived as the next big thing until Marciano crushed him. But no matter what the loyalists said, they were seen as sentimental types yearning for the 1950s. By the '80s, the only Rocky who mattered was played by Sylvester Stallone.

When Larry Holmes insulted Marciano after failing to beat his undefeated streak, however, there was a sudden bloc of support for the dead champion. But even this episode was used against Marciano. Knee-jerk liberal journalists accused Marciano's fans of using his memory to diminish Holmes, an unpopular black champion.

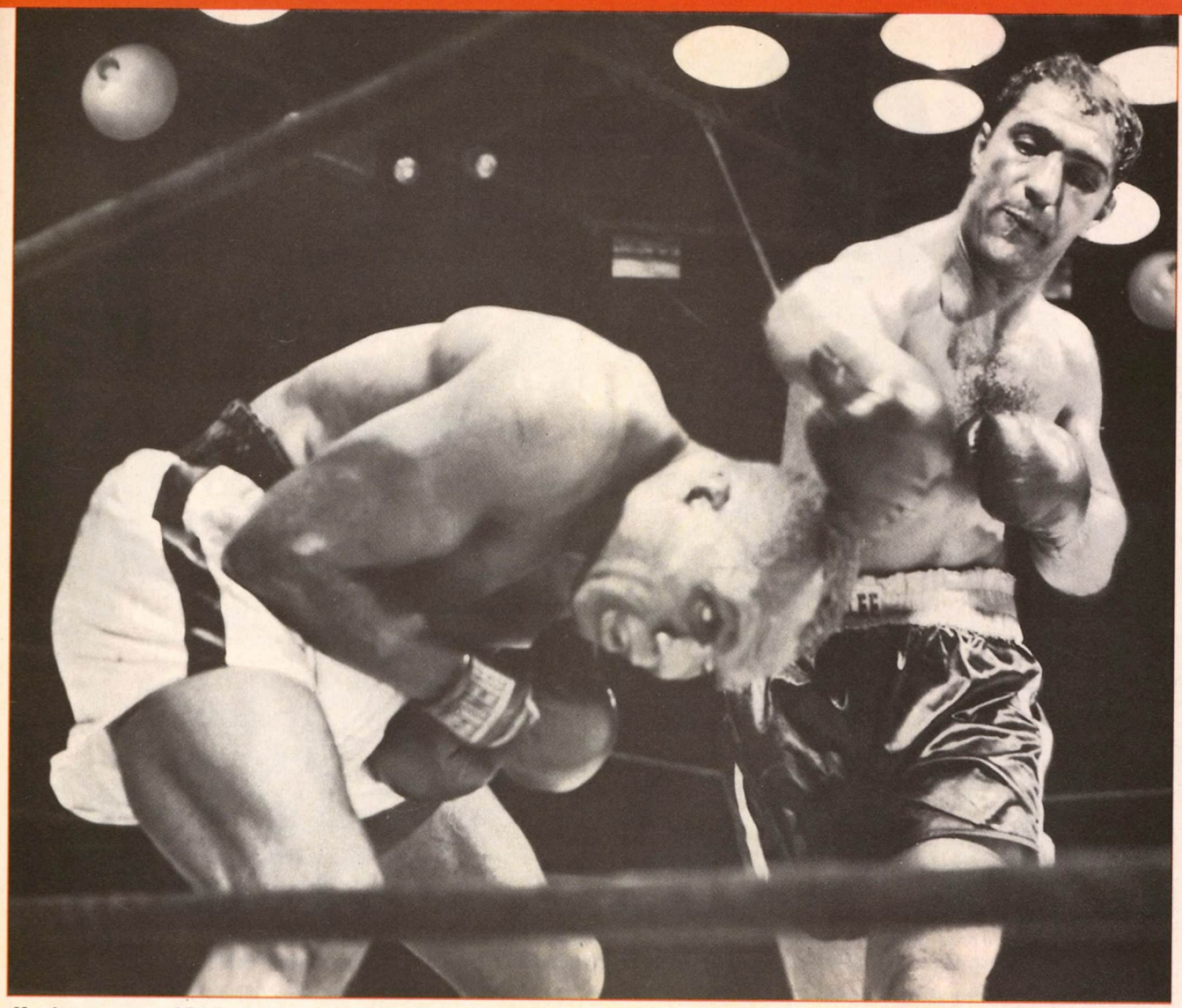
It might be said that Marciano suffered from an unforgivable whiteness. While being a white champion definitely boosted his popularity, it seemed to prevent him from being praised in the same manner of Louis or Ali, as if being a hero to Italian-Americans lacked the socio-political cachet of being a black hero. Also, the cynical responses generated by modern white fighters seemed to reach back to infect Marciano. None of this was fair.

If the '80s were bad to Marciano, the '90s were worse, due mostly to a brutal *Sports Illustrated* story published in 1993 depicting Marciano as a womanizing cheapskate with serious mob ties. A cheesy made-for-cable movie followed in 1999. But in 2002, Russell Sullivan's excellent biography, *Rocky Marciano: The Rock Of His Times*, put some of these rumors into perspective. The women were a result of his crumbling marriage; the cheapness, although extreme, was due to his dread of poverty. As for the mob ties, well, did you really think a famous Italian-American fighter would go an entire career without knowing a few sinister types?

Marciano was on friendly terms with many gangsters, including Cleveland's Pete DiGravio, Chicago's Frankie Fratto, notorious Mafia don



Manager Al Weill looks on as trainer Charlie Goldman laces up Marciano's glove for a sparring session. Weill was also the matchmaker for the mob-connected International Boxing Club. But despite an oblique connection to the underworld, Marciano was never associated with any mob-related scandal.



Marciano was named THE RING's Fighter of the Year three times, in 1952, '54, and '55. Moreover, three of his fights were selected as THE RING's Fight of the Year, including the first Jersey Joe Walcott brawl, in 1952 (pictured).

Vito Genovese, and even Frankie Carbo, the gangster and murderer who controlled much of the boxing business during the post-war years. Marciano met them through Al Weill, who along with managing Marciano, was the matchmaker for the mob-fueled International Boxing Club. Sportswriters of the day kept quiet about Marciano's friends. The press was less prying in those days. They also didn't want to make the wrong guys angry. But even if Marciano was sometimes called "the IBC's house fighter," there has never been any evidence that Marciano participated in, or benefited from, any underworld shenanigans.

The proper way to remember Marciano is as a hard-working champion who went from a small arena in Providence all the way to Yankee Stadium. He was the American success story, the son of an immigrant who made good. Unlike most fighters, he never embarrassed himself in the ring. Combine that with a lot of dramatic fights, three of which were chosen as THE RING's Fight of the Year, and you have a man who deserves some accolades. And even as time gradually wears down his legend, Marciano occasionally lands a haymaker from beyond the grave. When ESPN presented its list of the 100 greatest athletes of the century, Marciano was one of only seven fighters included, coming in at number 51. That old purist Dempsey was rated below him at number 52.

In some corners of America, Marciano's greatness has never been questioned, especially in New England. From as far south as Providence, Rhode Island, where the majority of his fights took place, up through his hometown of Brockton, Massachusetts, where his victory parades stretched for several city blocks, and as far north as Boston's North End, where Italian families huddled around their radios to hear his fights, the Marciano story echoes like a folk tale passed from one generation to the next. It could be because he died young, in a plane crash, and took on the tragic glow of all who die young, but when the old-timers tell you about him, there's urgency in their storytelling; they don't want you to forget the guy. Compared to the other New England sports star of

Marciano promised he'd never do anything to disgrace the title, and kept his word, conducting himself as a true champion both inside and out of the ring throughout his career. This publicity shot was staged for the cameras, but Rocky was genuinely the big brother many kids wished they had.

his day, the crabby Ted Williams, Marciano was immensely likable. He was the big brother we all wished we had.

Recently, British heavyweight Danny Williams revealed that he watches videos of Marciano for inspiration. The Marciano influence was never more apparent than during Williams' one-armed win over Mark Potter in 2000.

"It's one of my performances I'm really proud of because if Rocky Marciano was alive—he's one of my favorite fighters, and a hearty fighter himself—he would have been proud of the heart I showed in that fight," Williams said. Williams also showed grit in his win over Mike Tyson and his valiant loss to Vitali Klitschko. Another Tyson conqueror, Kevin McBride, always reminds us that he trains in Marciano's hometown. And 25 years ago, a Mexican boxing fan was so enamored of Marciano that he named his son after him. The baby grew up to be featherweight contender Rocky Juarez. That a black fighter from England, a transplanted Irishman, and a Mexican from Texas were all touched by Marciano says something about his legacy. There have been other notable champions from New England, but Rocky is the one who stirs up the grandest memories. One of the keys to Marciano's enduring appeal is that he understood a champion's role. "I made up my mind that I would never do anything to disgrace the title," Marciano said. "I felt that I was privileged to hold it, and it scared me a little bit."

Marciano's instinctive understanding of a champion's responsibility was revealed when a tour of the Philippines landed him in a colony of 1,200 lepers. Uncertain of what to say, he simply stood on a little stage and started shadowboxing for them. The crowd of lepers began applauding and chanting. An interpreter told Marciano they were saying, "God bless you, Rocky!"

Times have changed since Marciano's era. Friend Street in Boston used to be a hot spot for the local fight crowd. Fans gathered there when Marciano beat Freddy Beshore at the old Boston Garden in 1951. Nowadays, the boxing gyms and saloons have been replaced by yuppie health clubs and a Hooters. The only sign of Marciano is in the window of a ticket agency where a small, faded poster hangs. It reads: "Help Keep the Memory of a Great Champion Alive." A souvenir stand at Boston's Quincy Market, which is bursting with local

Gone but not forgotten: Marciano's daughter, Mary Anne, places a portrait of her father on his coffin during funeral services in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Today, boxing fans, especially those from Rocky's New England area, jealously guard his memory.

sports memorabilia, has one lonely photo of Marciano for sale. Fittingly, it's a parade pic from the good old days.

In 1999, the U.S. Postal Service honored Marciano by placing his likeness on the 33-cent stamp.

But if Boston is losing touch with Marciano, the embers of his legend still burn brightly in the city where it all started.

Visit Brockton someday. The city's sports stadium is named after Marciano. For years, The Brockton Enterprise ran a beautiful tribute to him on its obituary page. The photo they used was a glamour shot from late in Marciano's career, possibly from one of his many profiles in *Look* or *The Saturday Evening Post*. Underneath the photo was a Hallmark-style poem about a loving brother, husband, and champion. It ran every August 31, and if you weren't careful, it could bring a tear to your eye.

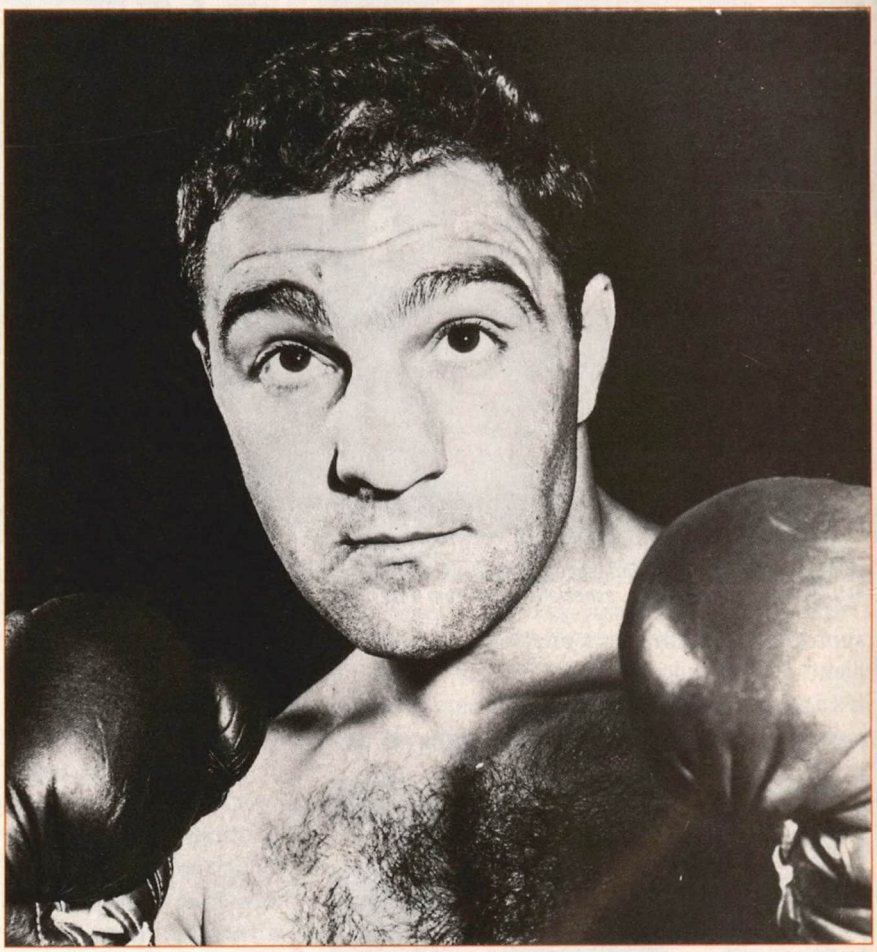
Every Brocktonian of a certain age has a Rocky story, and they'll gladly share it with you. Maybe they'll tell you about the fortune Marciano supposedly buried in the Brockton Fairgrounds. Maybe they'll direct you to George's Cafe on Belmont Street, where the walls are covered with tributes to Marciano. Or maybe they'll tell you about the time they saw Rocky downtown and shook his hand. They want you to know he really existed. When America took a breather between World War II and the rest of the century, Marciano brought this little burgh into the spotlight with him. His admirers are still saying thank you. ■

Don Stradley is a freelance writer from Massachusetts. He spent part of his childhood in Brockton, and recalls watching the Marciano-Ali computer fight on television.

ROCKY REMEMBERED

ROCKY'S RESUME

A Fight-by-Fight Listing Of Marciano's Professional Record



1947

March 17	Lee Epperson, Holyoke, MA	KO 3

1948

July 12	Harry Bilzarian, Providence, RI	KO 1
July 19	John Edwards, Providence	KO 1
Aug. 9	Bobby Quinn, Providence	KO 3
Aug. 23	Eddie Ross, Providence	KO 1
Aug. 30	Jimmy Weeks, Providence	KO 1
Sept. 13	Jerry Jackson, Providence	KO 1
Sept. 20	Bill Hardeman, Providence	KO 1
Sept. 30	Gilbert Cardione, Washington, DC	KO 1
Oct. 4	Bob Jefferson, Providence	KO 2
Nov. 29	Pat Connolly, Providence	KO 1
Dec. 14	Gilley Ferron, Philadelphia, PA	KO 2

1949

March 21	Johnny Pretzie, Providence	KO 5
March 28	Artie Donato, Providence	KO 1
April 11	James Walls, Providence	KO 3
May 2	Jimmy Evans, Providence	KO 3
May 23	Don Mogard, Providence	W 10
July 18	Harry Haft, Providence	KO 3
Aug. 16	Pete Louthis, New Bedford, MA	KO 3
Sept. 26	Tommy DiGiorgio, Providence	KO 4
Oct. 10	Ted Lowry, Providence	W 10
Nov. 7	Joe Dominic, Providence	KO 2
Dec. 2	Pat Richards, New York, NY	KO 2
Dec. 19	Phil Muscato, Providence	KO 5
Dec. 30	Carmine Vingo, New York	KO 6

1950

March 24	Roland LaStarza, New York	W 10
June 5	Eldridge Eatman, Providence	KO 3
July 10	Gino Buonvino, Boston, MA	KO 10
Sept. 18	Johnny Shkor, Providence	KO 6
Nov. 13	Ted Lowry, Providence	W 10
Dec. 18	Bill Wilson, Providence	KO 1

1951

Jan. 29	Keene Simmons, Providence	KO 8
March 20	Harold Mitchell, Hartford, CT	KO 2
March 26	Art Henri, Providence,	KO 9
April 30	Red Applegate, Providence	W 10
July 12	Rex Layne, New York, NY	KO 6
Aug. 27	Freddie Beshore, Boston	KO 4
Oct. 26	Joe Louis, New York	KO 8

1952

Feb. 13	Lee Savold, Philadelphia	KO 7
April 21	Gino Buonvino, Providence	KO 2
May 12	Bernie Reynolds, Providence	KO 3
July 28	Harry Matthews, New York	KO 2
Sept. 23	Jersey Joe Walcott, Philadelphia	KO 13
	(Wins Heavyweight Championship)	

1953

May 15	Jersey Joe Walcott, Chicago, IL	KO 1
	(Retains World Heavyweight Title)	
Sept. 24	Roland LaStarza, New York, NY	KO 11
	(Retains World Heavyweight Title)	

1954

June 17	Ezzard Charles, New York	W 15
	(Retains World Heavyweight Title)	
Sept. 17	Ezzard Charles, New York	KO 8
	(Retains World Heavyweight Title)	

1955

May 16	Don Cockell, San Francisco, CA	KO 9
	(Retains World Heavyweight Title)	
Sept. 21	Archie Moore, New York	KO 9
	(Retains World Heavyweight Title)	

FIGHTS	WON	LOST	DRAW	KOs
49	49	0	0	43

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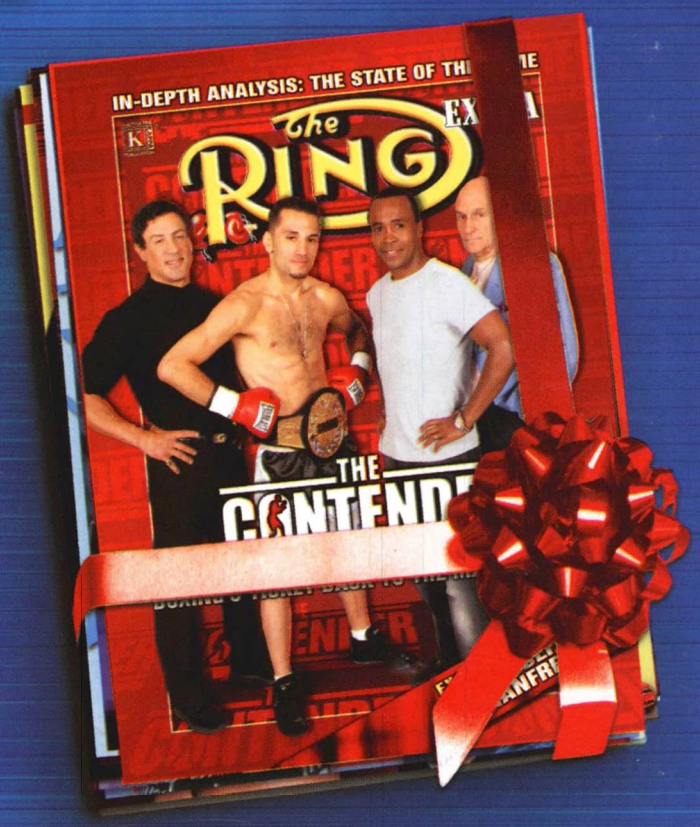

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